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VISIONS OF FANCY

BASKETT.

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VISIONS OF FANCY.

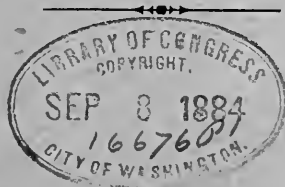
—A—

POETICAL WORK.

—BY—



N. M. BASKETT, M. D.



ST. LOUIS, MO.:
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1884.

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DEDICATION.

TO

THE MEMORY OF

MY PARENTS, MY WIFE AND CHILDREN,

MY HONORED PRECEPTOR, DR. A. E. GORE, OF
PARIS, MO., AND TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY AND

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

N. M. BASKETT, M. D., MOBERLY, MO.

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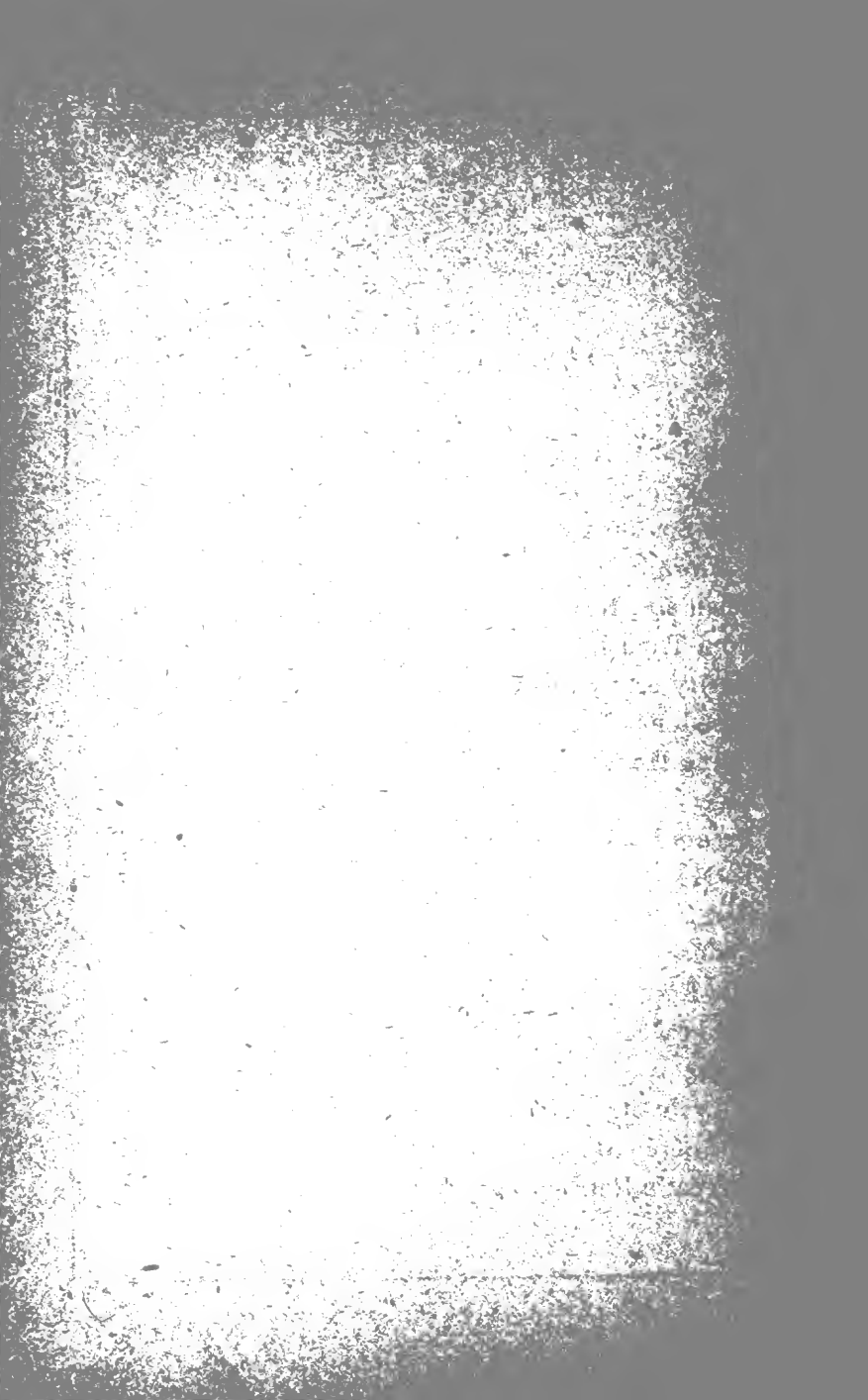
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PREFACE.

Every book is its own excuse for existence, and needs no apology for its publication. If worthy, its merits will be appreciated by a discriminating public. If not, it will drop into merited oblivion. This book is submitted to the public without further comment by

THE AUTHOR.

July 13, '84.



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POEMS.

THE THREE ANGELS.

Out of the vague, vast void of space
God called three angels to His face.
On work of mercy, gone for years,
Their spirit eyes were full of tears.
Then calmly spake He : "I would know
The secret cause of all thy woe.
Doth not all heaven's fruition keep
Some balm to comfort those who weep?"

The first sprite said : " I weep, that men
Forget Thy laws and sin again ;
And though I strive to lead them right
They still do evil in Thy sight."

The second cried : " O Lord ! I weep,
While through the years my watch I keep,
O'er all man's misery and pain ;
O'er hearts that cry for love in vain ;

O'er eager hands that clutch for bread,
And faces where no hope is shed ;
O'er disappointment, toil and trial,
And patient years of self-denial ;
O'er hearts decayed and voices dumb—
Longing for joys that never come."

" And I—O Lord," the third replied;
" Find death abounds on every side ;
For him who dies devoid of faith
I find an everlasting death ;
Long years, unending years of pain,
Without a hope to rise again.
And when these things my eyes had seen,
Better, I cried, man had not been:
What need for sacrifice of Christ
If men still fail of Paradise ?"

He spake : " Who questions what I will ?
My laws are pure and righteous still ;
And God needs not to justify
His way unto inferioreye.
Yet, brooding like the gentle dove,
O'er every human heart sits Love.
Love that begot and fashioned him,
That moulded every rounded limb,
And raised him from the bed of clay
Into the light of earth's young day.
And still Love watches o'er each child
With features suffering, pale and mild.
Go, then, and know, where'er man be,
Throughout profound infinity,

Love still will guard his wayward flight,
And lead through darkness into light.
Know, whatsoe'er may be its course,
The stream will rise unto its source ;
And man from misery shall ascend
To find His God, His saving Friend."

August, 1882.

IF I COULD ONLY KNOW.

A SONG.

If I could only count, my love,
Upon thy love for e'er,
Whatever woes in life might come,
I would not care or fear ;
For fate is strong and pain is strong,
And bitter is life's gall,
But strong as fate or pain may be,
Love stronger is than all.

If I could only know, my love,
Whate'er shall be my doom,
Forever in thy heart of hearts,
My love should find a home :
No night could dim the light, no cloud
Could hide my perfect day ;
The knowledge of thy love for me
Would drive the night away.

But Slander's tongue is strong, my love,
The voice of Hate is deep ;
Hints darkly strewn have poisoned life,
As dreams have poisoned sleep :

But oh ! if I could only know—
Whate'er shall be my doom—
Forever in thy heart of hearts
My love shall find a home.

THE SOLDIER'S FAREWELL SONG.

Mother, when the snare drums roll,
Think upon thy soldier boy ;
When the distant church bells toll,
Think they're knelling for his soul.

When you hear the cannon's roar,
Think upon thy soldier boy ;
In the ranks he treads before,
Thou may'st see his face no more.

When they come with solemn tread,
Think upon thy soldier boy :
'Tis the ritual that is read
O'er a soldier lying dead.

When the troops are marching home,
Think upon thy soldier boy :
If with them he should not come,
Know he met a warrior's doom.

FAREWELL.

A SONG.

For what we were in days of yore,
Which never more can be,
I press a kiss upon thy cheek,
And breathe a prayer for thee.

I lay my hand in thine, and speak
The accents of farewell ;
I leave unsaid the sorrowing words
Which my poor tongue would tell.

May life grow bright along the way
Whereon thy feet shall tread ;
May time reveal no sadder day,
May pleasure deck thy head.

And when thou tread'st life's darkened slope,
Unto the final end,
O, may'st thou turn and breathe a prayer
For him who is thy friend !

O, may thy life ne'er darkened be
With shadows of regret !
May'st thou go onward, and life's sun
In golden glory set.

THEN AND NOW.

The world's thought was youth's thought
When father Adam trod it ;
For God wrought and Truth taught
Amid the angels' plaudit ;
And men sang and worlds sang
In ecstasy together,
And trees bloomed and flowers sprang
In that heavenly weather.

Serene then and green then
The earth was full of blisses ;

Complete then and sweet then
As young lips wet with kisses;
No morrow brought sorrow,
No day the dread of dying;
Each eye then was dry then,
No voice was hoarse with sighing.

No white stone on earth shone
To tell of vanished pleasure;
No hand wrought, nor man thought,
To buy or sell for treasure;
But white ships with wet lips
Sailed over seas of glory,
To green strands and fair lands,
Before the word was hoary.

Now earth's thought is old thought,
The world itself is weary;
And man sighs, while Time flies,
That every day is dreary;
God walks not and talks not
With man, as He has spoken,
And Love now wears a pale brow,
For the hearts of men are broken.

The flowers bloom, but the grave's gloom
Is in their shades of beauty;
The birds sing in the young spring
As if from sense of duty.
In the tomb's shade man's hopes are laid,
And the old, old earth is groaning
For the new time and the true time
That shall still the voice of moaning.

TO A THRUSH.

Thou gentle warbler of the spring,
With ashy breast and auburn wing,
I greet thee as a blessed thing;

For thou hast come
To tell us that all birds shall sing
And nature bloom.

Before the trees have donned their green
Thou charrest the freshly budding scene,
And cheerest us with thy voice serene;

Thy warbling tongue,
From winter's darkness, seems to glean
A joy unseen.

And from yon weather-beaten oak,
That long hath stood the tempest's shock,
The lightning's flash, the woodman's stroke,

Thou pourest thy praise,
Ere earth hath donned the emerald cloak
Of spring's warm days.

Then, when the spring-time grass is wet,
Thou broodest o'er the violet,
And singest thy song unto thy mate

Upon her nest,
And, listening to thee, I forget
My deep unrest.

True poet of that vernal birth
Which wakes all nature into mirth
And vivifies a sleeping earth,
Sing on! Sing on!
Some abler tongue shall tell thy worth
When thou art gone.

Thus should the poet's song be sung
For rich and poor, for old and young,
In sweet, melodious, joyous tongue,
 To thrill the heart;
Thus should his trembling lyre be strung
 With magic art:

Thus should love's artless tale be told;
Thus peace her siren wings should fold,
And claim her blessings, not in bold
 And haughty voice,
But in a tongue untouched by cold,
 That cries "rejoice!"

Thus life should be one lasting song
Of manful work, deep-willed and strong,
An endless struggle against wrong—
 A manly fight
To help each fainting heart along
 And 'stablish right.

June, 1883.

PURITY AND HOPE IN DEATH.

Flowers shed their sweetest breath
When the white frosts blight,
And eyes which close in death
 Give their truest light.

The earth weeps tears of dew
Over the vanished day;
And true eyes fill with sorrow, too,
 When Love flies away.

But morn shall come again,
And spring restore the flowers ;
And the soul in other worlds regain
The love lost in ours.

FREEDOM'S DEAD.

Weep not for those who fall in freedom's cause ;
Sweet is their sleep, and history's pencil draws
Their fervor, and the poet sings each name ;
Each name undying sweeps through endless ages,
Emblazoned on the monuments of fame.

Their names are borne by every breeze that
blows ;
Their names are sung by every stream which
flows ;
And, disenthralled from boundaries and powers,
Though tyranny around her misery wages,
Are lisped as those who died in Freedom's
bowers.

Oh, sweet shall bloom the flowers upon their bed ;
The oak leaf ever circles round their head ;
Huge monuments uppled shall tell their story,
And every nation that for right engages
Shall teach its orators to spread their glory.

But go ye forth and weep for him who stands
With silent tongue and menial folded hands ;
Who, while around him howls the tyrannic rout,
And hideous Ignorance like a giant rages,
Lifts not his hands, or gives one free-born shout.

GOING HOME.

I'm going back. My feet shall press
The dry leaves of the wilderness,
And 'neath the oak trees, straight and tall,
I'll watch the days of Autumn fall,
And from the great limbs, bare and brown,
Hear acorn cups come rattling down.
Perchance, 'neath those old trees the truth
Will take the early dreams of youth,
And broad Experience teach to me
My early dreams' futility.
The partridge in the hidden nook
Will call again. The babbling brook
Will still go murmuring down the glade,
And sing the same sweet song it made
When first I heard it; and again
The thrush will wake the early strain,
At morning, on the dewy spray,
I heard before I went away.
No more ambition's restless dreams
Shall worry me, but sunny beams
Filtering through long green sweeps of wood,
Where God walks in the solitude.
No more the sturdy fight for place;
I go to look on Nature's face,
To lay my form upon her breast,
And soothe my weary limbs to rest,

Forgetting all the world, to be
Lulled by her ceaseless minstrelsy.
I'll seek again those faces mild
That knew and loved me when a child;
Some gone—alas! Some older grown;
And many too, like me, have flown;
But early friends are longest true,
And I will youthful themes renew
With those fond spirits who remain,
And live my boyhood o'er again:
And by the cheerful fireside
I'll reck not if the world is wide;
But youthful sports our mind shall fill,
And early triumphs too shall thrill
Our hearts once more. And we will talk
Of those with whom we once did walk
In joyousness, but who have passed
To where there is true peace at last.
Careless of Fame, my days shall pass
Like welling springs through waving grass.
No more a martyr on the rack,
I leave the world and seek the track
I gladly fled when but a boy,
For there I know is more of joy,
Than weary through the world to roam
For Fame or Wealth. I'm going home.

EÖLE.

And thou art dead, Eöle !
The trump of life is blown ;
The moonlight, pale and holy,
Rests on thy burial stone ;
And here at midnight, slowly,
I come to weep alone.
Through shadows dark and solemn,
Where sighs the cypress tree,
By many a ghostlike column,
I make my way to thee.

The restless river, sighing,
Winds through the silent glade ;
The whippoorwill is crying
In yonder bower of shade ;
And the red rose is dying
Where thy dead form is laid.
The dewdrops, clear and chilly,
Which sorrowing angels weep,
Fall on the snowy lily
Upon thy grave asleep.

I weep for what I knew thee,
And what I know thou art :
If tear drops could renew thee,
From thy grave thou wouldst start.
The clear drops which bedew thee
Flow from my fainting heart ;
For the night of grief is o'er me
By thy burial stone,
As I see the years before me
Which I must tread alone.

And so at night, Eöle,
When all the world is still,
When the night winds breathe lowly
Across the purple hill,
When the moonlight, pale and holy,
Lights the ripples of the rill,
Lovingly, tenderly, slowly,
Through grasses damp and deep,
Burdened with melancholy,
I seek thy grave to weep.

DREAMLAND.

A SONG.

I know a land where flowers
Bloom evermore ;
Birds sing in groves of spice
On that sweet shore ;
Fairy shadows lightly flit
Over bright streams.
I see this land of flowers
Ever in dreams.

Fancy is there awake,
Weaving soft spells ;
Music from bush and brake
Ceaselessly wells ;
Sprites fairer far than earth's
Float 'neath calm skies,
Singing sweet songs, that bring
Rest to tired eyes.

Often I wander there,
Seeing in dreams,
Far through the magic air,
Angelic gleams
Of faces that long ago
Passed from the earth,
But in fanciful slumber
Again have birth.

TO MEMORY.

Sweet guardian of the storehouse of the mind,
Open the doors, that I may search and find
The golden words which lie concealed behind.

Come with me ; hold thy glimmering candle high
And light each crannied nook, that I may spy
The place where youth's bright diamond treasures lie.

Draw back the curtains, and display to view
Fancy's bright, silken garb of gorgeous hue,
With warp forever changing into colors new ;
And bring me forth those bags of gleaming gold,
Which wit and mirth in jovial concert hold ;
And let the treasures they contain be told.

And sorrow's silvery wealth shall be untied ;
And melancholy, pale and leaden eyed,
While we are searching, shall stand at our side
And tell her story. With unstudied art
Love shall reveal the pulsings of the heart,
And hope shall make the shades of night depart.

Help, thou, to form the visions I essay,
The shade and light, the hollow, gleaming day,
And the dark night from which stars pass away.

Bright guardian, Memory! make the vanished
clear;

Whisper sweet recollections in my ear;
Walk thou beside me till my change appear.

GOD.

Throughout the hollow void that men call space
An Unknown Being broods in awful state,
Thro' Whom are *time* and *circumstance* and *place*,
And *destiny*, or *fate*.

Sitting aloft, He notes each action done;
Pois'd are His scales with nicety, and they turn,
Weighing each circumstance beneath the sun
With awful unconcern.

In Him is life, with all its various laws;
In Him is death, with all its varying woes:
Each force to nourish life, or bid it pause,
He knows its ebbs and flows.

Each broken law of Nature brings its woe
To him who breaks it; and each good deed done
Here finds its just reward; for as men sow
Men reap beneath the sun.

Only no Special Providence is here;
His laws, immutable, stand fixed and strong
Through æon upon æon, year on year;
Nature will right each wrong.

He will not answer if a strong man cry ;
He will not startle if a sparrow shriek ;
For man and sparrow in their agony
Alike to Him are weak.

He knows no boundary of Time, or Space ;
He makes His home beyond the farthest star ;
And where we meet in converse face to face
He and His angels are.

The ages that have passed behind the flood,
Those cycles upon cycles vast and dim,
These shifting days and those to come, know God,
And still shall know of Him.

His laws unchanging then are unchanged still ;
That which He wills will run its course, and be
The cause, or consequence of that which will
Exist eternally.

If a man murder, Sorrow haunts his life,
A red-eyed Nemesis upon his path ;
If a man yield himself to crime, or strife,
His days shall end in wrath.

If a man work and live with all in peace,
Content shall strew his pathway with her flowers ;
If men live soberly, their pains shall cease,
And old age crown their hours.

So well He holds the thread of Circumstance,
The drifting mote within the golden beam
Is no more subject to the play of chance
Than the broad, silver stream,

Which bears a navy on its placid breast :
Nothing so large is but He knows it all ;
Nothing escapes His vision ; He doth test
Alike the great and small.

He bowls the worlds forth with resistless force,
Or woos the crocus from its wintry gloom ;
That to whirl on forever in its course,
This to smile on a tomb.

We may not think of Him as man in form ;
All eyes He lives watching—His perfect law
Sending Spring sunshine, bringing Winter storm,
Without defect or flaw.

All hands, He waits with power to execute
The perfect mandates of His perfect will ;
All mind, He fashions plastic matter mute,
And glories to instil

Soul into that unhoping clod whereon
We tread to-day ; eager at His command
A thousand beauteous forms rise up, and fawn
Upon His mighty hand.

Unbounded, unapproached and uncontrolled,
He seeks not praise, though all creation bows ;
No less will man with eager tongue unfold
Tales, which the heart arouse,

Of wandering men lost in the awful night,
Traveling thro' devious paths, weak and astray,
Brought by Incarnate Deity to light
Of Heaven's purest ray.

Thus will he strive still to embody forth

Some likeness to the Unknown, who, all calm,
Includes all worlds, and all that girds the earth,
And claims all in "I am."

No human mind can rise unto His height,

No soul can soar adown the vast abyss,
Fathoming the fulness of the Infinite,

Or read what power is His.

ELSINORE.

When the bloom has fallen away

From the stalk, Elsinore ;
And shadows haunt the day,
Elsinore ;

When the green spires fade away,
And the grass turns brown and gray,
And the winds of winter stray,
Elsinore ;

When the youthful pulses fail
In their rounds, Elsinore ;
And the song become a wail,
Elsinore ;

When time's destroying plow
With its furrows marks my brow,
Will you love me then as now,
Elsinore ?

Ah ! when breezes fan the cheek
In our youth, Elsinore ;
Then the soul will gladly speak,
Elsinore ;

In the gladness of life's spring
Love will sit and plume his wing,
A happy, thoughtless thing,
Elsinore.

But when winter's winds are out
With their wails, Elsinore ;
Then love's a thing of doubt,
Elsinore.

When the blasts of winter moan,
Then love will leave his throne,
And our hearts are left alone,
Elsinore.

THE FUTURE.

Oft I ponder on the future
Which life's wave must yet roll o'er ;
And I wonder when my spirit
Shall be wrecked, and on what shore.

I am weary
Thinking of the days before.

Visions rise and hover o'er me,
Gleams, perhaps, of future day ;
Hope's serenest stars restore me,
Glinting on my darkened way ;
And before me
Flashes high ambition's ray.

Or, perchance, small voices murmur
In the chambers of my soul :
" Press ye on into the summer,

Where life's emerald leaves unfold ;
Through the winter,
Where the crystal waters roll."

Angel voices tremble round me,
Soft repeating o'er my name ;
Angel hands are laid upon me,
Thrilling all my ardent frame ;
And in fancy
All life's paths are bright with fame.

Come, ye muses ! Come, ye muses !
From your high Delphian hill ;
Breathe your heavenly spirit through me ;
Let me wait upon ye still.
Let the world be
Silent ; listening to your will.

FREDERICKSBURGH.
DECORATION DAY, 1883.

'Tis early spring and love is king,
For all the woods with music ring ;
And as of yore I tread once more
The pathways of my native shore.
The balmy air floats rich and rare
From hills which rise serene and fair ;
While o'er them lies the unclouded skies,
With azure hues of paradise.
The rippling rills laugh through the hills,
For winter's hand no longer chills ;
The spring complete showers at my feet
The cherry blossoms fair and sweet.

Joyous and free doth Acquia flee
In silver ripples to the sea ;
From beds of snow it falls to flow
Through valleys where the violets blow.

The quaint old town is nestled down
Among the hills which tower around ;
As some stern guard they watch and ward
These quiet valleys of the Lord.

How great the change since yonder range
Was crowned with guns and banners strange ;
And miles on miles, in long defiles,
Two hosts swept down these mountain aisles.

One wore the blue, a royal hue ;
The other gray, as strong and true :
A shadow falls o'er these white walls,
The sprite of hate and discord calls.

I hear the beat of steady feet
Pressing along each stony street ;
The rolling drum proclaims they come,
And Nature's songs grow still and dumb.

Night shrouds the plain, and night must wane
Ere brother's blood shall brother stain ;
In lurid rays the camp fires blaze
On mountain sides, through misty haze.

And like a ghost from post to post—
A watcher o'er the sleeping host—
The sentinel glides round to tell
The watching stars that all is well.

Night whirls away, the morning gray
Slow blushes into golden day ;
Now shrill and clear the soldiers hear
The trumpet blasts spread far and near.

The camp so still begins to thrill
With all the throes of life ; and chill
From those fair peaks the cold blast breaks
Upon the soldiers' grizzled cheeks.

How life abounds ! The tocsin sounds ;
The chieftain gallops on his rounds ;
Cry after cry pierces the sky
From men who dared to do and die.

Men's eyes are set, their cheeks are wet ;
The bravest hearts can ne'er forget
Home, loved ones, friends—kind memory lends
Each cherished face, The vision ends.

In battle rank from flank to flank,
Mid sabre clash and musket clank,
The soldiers there breathe one short prayer
Before their war shouts rend the air.

Prepared they stand, each nerve-strung hand
Grasps with firm clutch the battle brand ;
Bright banners fly along the sky,
And trumpets peal triumphantly.

Hark ! hark ! the guns ! Our noblest sons
Fall fast where that fierce thunder runs ;
A sulphurous cloud drifts, like a shroud,
To hide the mad and struggling crowd.

A shrieking fife sounds o'er the strife
Where grisly death shakes hands with life;
And loud and high the wild war cry
On the thick murk goes hurrying by.

Men charge—retreat—like waves which meet
To separate. How the drums beat!
The leaders cry! Men fall and die,
And still the shout is victory.

Quick, sharp and short comes the report
Of musketry—steeds neigh and snort—
Columns are formed, and heights are stormed,
And held awhile and then re-stormed.

A change must come. The noisy drum
Forgets to beat. The fife grows dumb;
The cannons fail, and on the gale
Sweeps by the soldiers' dying wail.

And on that plain, from every vein,
Brothers have shed their blood like rain;
The blessed night shuts out the sight
Which testifies the nation's blight.

They sleep! They sleep! We may not weep;
Each patriot pulse beats strong and deep
Over their grave. Each died to save
What he thought right; and all were brave.

These sons of fame—what tongue of shame
Would dare malign their souls of flame!
Nay, let us bring the flowers of spring
To deck their graves while Peace is king.

My visions cease—I find release—
White wings float round and whisper "Peace ;"
The gales which beat so rare and sweet
Drift cherry petals at my feet.

These scented gales along these vales
No longer bear the nation's wails ;
Above each tomb the white flowers bloom
And fill the air with rich perfume.

And here I lie all quietly,
And watch the sunny hours go by ;
These glorious hills my being thrills
With love of life time never chills.

SONNET.

Slow from the west the sunbeams fade away ;
Eastward I watch the purple veil of night
Drawn up the sky to overspread the light ;
The shades of darkness triumph over day.

The song of birds is stilled ; through twilight gray
The everlasting stars are shining bright
In peaceful concord from unfathomed height,
Watching the restless hours glide away.

The lowing herds are waiting for their food ;
The plowboy whistles, glad his work is done ;
By chimney lug the brown-faced farmer waits
Till the warm meal is ready for his brood ;
In the far distance sounds the creaking gates ;
The work of day is o'er. Night is begun.

THE OLD MAN'S PRAYER.

The Spring had clothed the earth with green ;
The stars were in the sky,
And sweet was nature's evening scene
Unto the poet's eye :
Through Austin's wood I wandered forth,
Along a lonely way,
And found an old and wrinkled man,
Who there had come to pray,

THE PRAYER.

“ Around me, sweet and softly fall
The sighings of the wood ;
I hear the watching night-owl call
In vernal solitude :

The shadows overtop the hill
And make the evening gray,
And stars come out as slowly fade
The dying beams of day.

How softly comes the balmy wind,
And breathes upon my cheek ;
Each baser passion dies away,
And spirits seem to speak.
Slow humming on the evening air
The busy insects drone ;
And twilight falls—I pour my prayer
To Thee, O Lord, alone.

Back, through the vista of the past,
My restless spirit roves ;
How sweet for one to kneel and hold
Pure thoughts of those he loves ;

For in the dimness gathering round
Old memories are revived;
And all the roses I have found
Are of their thorns deprived.

Now fills the soul of man for man
With universal love,
And all the passions of the heart
Draw nigher heaven above;
And purified of baseness,
The heart doth realize
That he who judges man is judged
By One within the skies.

Dear Lord, into Thy presence I
Come, tremblingly and slow;
My weaknesses, my many sins,
I feel that Thou dost know;
Whatever is of good has been
Thy perfect gift to me;
Whatever evil I have done
Lies open, Lord, to thee.

Around me are the moments, Lord,
Which Thou dost freely give;
Before me are my future hours,
Through which I yet must live;
Behind me, like a little span,
Lie those already past,
Dark with the shadow which Thy great
Eternity has cast.

Lord, Thou dost know the lot of man;
Subject to doubt and sin—

He may resolve to work for good
Yet evil enters in.
Before me pass in long review,
My actions of the past,
And, aided by Thy light, I view
My life and stand aghast.

Here in this solitude I see
How thoughtless I have been ;
How little of the pure and good
In my past life is seen.
Oh ! make me, Lord, a holy man,
Through future years to run
On tireless feet along thy paths,
Unto my setting sun.

From day to day, from year to year.
Still may I think of good,
And what the eternal life shall be ;
Here in this solitude
I dedicate my life to thee :
Take Thou, and sow the seed ;
Make me, in years I yet shall see,
A man in truth and deed.

With Faith, with honest Charity,
That graspeth all mankind ;
With eyes of love, yet bold and free,
Whenever I may find
One who has wandered far from Thee
With warped and mocking mind,
To lead him by the hand to good
Which Thou hast here designed ;

To feed the poor, to visit those
Who are with woe distressed ;
I feel in blessing others I,
By Thee, will still be blessed.
Let me not talk of love, and fail
To give love's blessed gifts ;
For he who helpeth man is blessed,
Rising with those he lifts.

Those merry stars remind me, Lord,
That night is setting in ;
They tell, like verses in Thy word,
There is a heaven to win.
I homeward go, and feel my hour
Has not been spent in vain,
Since in the wildwood's shady bower
Thy love is mine again.

THE SERENADE.

Young William, prince of youthful sports,
Had learned to strum the light guitar,
And sallied forth one summer eve,
While brightly gleamed the evening star,
Unto a large and stately pile,
Where dwelt a dear and beauteous maid,
Who deigned to bless him with her smile ;
He sought her for a serenade.

How blithe is youth ! He hummed a tune ;
Smiles chased each other o'er his face ;
The faintly gleaming crescent moon
Lit up his form, whose youthful grace

Cheered all who saw him ; and with joy,
Fearless of ill, our hero came,
With all the glad heart of a boy,
Beneath his loved one's window-frame.

The heavens were clear ; the golden hues
Of sunset lingered in the skies,
As life's rich fragrance thrills the rose
With sweetest perfume ere it dies.
Upon the emerald grass the dew
Fell from the spreading twilight gray,
And joyously the swallow flew,
Twittering to cheer the dying day.

She heard the first sweet chords he smote,
Seated behind the window-shade ;
She heard the first faint quavering note
His trembling, loving larynx made.
And in the shadows, unbetrayed,
She softly threw the window up,
As round the corner, on a raid,
-Appeared her father's bull-dog pup.

The song he sang was pure and clear—
Sweet words, set to a noble tune ;
It thrilled the balmy atmosphere,
Beneath that faint and crescent moon.
Swift strayed his fingers o'er the strings,
With melody the guitar rang,
And like an angel, minus wings,
Melodiously our hero sang.

THE SONG.

“How can I leave thee, dearest maid?
Thou art my life, my light, my sun;
When evening veils the world in shade,
I seek thine eyes, my darling one.
The sunlight of thy blessed smile,
Fair, lovely maid, is dear to me
As some rich, fruitful summer isle
To shipwrecked sailor on the sea.

“How can I leave thee? Let thine eyes
Glance from thy lattice bower and fall
On one who, loving, faints and dies,
Yet e’en in dying thy name doth call.
Oh! sweet as ever poet’s verse
In tenderest strain has said or sung,
Why should love be man’s direst curse,
Or hearts with purest hopes be wrung?

“Hear me, sweet maid! As yonder moon
Faints in the dark and wandering sea,
So on the atmosphere of tune
My life leaps forth to die in thee.
No longer bid my spirit grieve;
Accept my passion, pure and strong;
Accept my heart; ’twill ne’er deceive;
Accept this simple gift of song.”

So sang he; so he might have sung,
Perhaps, through all that lovely night,
Had not the pup, with beefy tongue
And firm-set teeth of pearly white,

Sprung from his resting-place and seized
Our young musician in the rear,
As if to say, "I am displeased,"
And want no "wandering minstrels" here.
And William flew on lightning wing;
Forgotten was the serenade:
He wanders forth no more to sing
At evening to the tender maid.
And, filled with pride, the bull-dog strong,
Unto her "sisters, cousins, aunts,"
Bears 'twixt his teeth the gift of song,
A quarter-section of Will's pants.

A YEAR'S RETROSPECT.

The song of the gentle bluebird
Rings out o'er the lea again;
Once more I hear the dripping
Of the softly falling rain;
The petals of the violet
Are blue on the verdant hill,
And away through the budding forest
Steals swiftly the babbling rill.
The call of the saucy jay-bird
Is heard adown the glen;
And there, by the blooming pasture,
Titters and chirps the wren;
The meadow-lark and cat-bird
Sing songs which they know best,
And chatter all the sunny days,
While they build the summer nest.

Oh, the joyful, merry spring-time !
Unto the hopeful heart
What pleasing, gentle fancies
Through the being seem to start ;
And even to one whose memories
Are less of joy than pain
The merry sounds of spring-time
Are never given in vain.

All hail, the-summer weather !
For the harvest fields are white ;
The ripening meadows quiver
With joy at the breezes light.
The reapers swing their cradles,
And sing their harvest tune,
And the currant and the cherry
Grow ripe in the sunny June.

The air is all a censer,
With the perfume of the rose ;
The pink, the golden buttercup,
Each in fragrant beauty glows ;
But blossoms fail and vanish,
And beauty hastes away,
When the winds of autumn usher in
The season of decay.

'Tis then the mellow peaches
And luscious apples glow ;
Then all the heavy bunches
Of grapes their purple show.
The verdant leaves of summer
Are streaked with red and gold,

And the long and waving grasses
Grow dry and hoar and cold.

The birds of summer vanish;
The bluebird and the jay,
And the meadow-lark and cat-bird
Fly to the South away.

Their nests still dangle in the trees,
To tell that they are gone,
And the winds of autumn murmur
That winter is coming on.

Then falls the Indian summer;
A cloud of hazy blue,
As if it fain would loiter
In beauty ever true.

'Tis the only friend that lingers
After the first cold day
To clasp the earth with its fingers,
And bid the flowers stay.

And then the winter cometh,
With the rush of the dreary rain;
The moan of the cold wind hummeth
A dirge on the window-pane;
The trees of the wood are naked
As ghosts in a graveyard grim;
The skies are dreary and clouded,
And the sun is cold and dim.

And then when the night has fallen,
And the wind is wailing around,
Like the voice of some pent-up demon
In a charnel, underground—

When the embers of the hearthstone
Have lost their radiant glow,
And the measured breath of the sleepers
In the apartments sounds so low,
On the hearth the dreary cricket
Begins a dismal strain,
Like a disappointed spirit
Sighing a song of pain
O'er hopes once warm and glorious,
Now faded, cold and still—
And as the cricket ceases
My heart grows weak and chill,
And my head droops down to my fingers,
And I listen to the moan
Of the solemn night-wind wailing
In a ceaseless dirge-like tone ;
And I gaze at the dying embers,
And wonder if even a stone
Is colder than this world of ours
To those who tread it alone.

THE MEDICAL STUDENT.

Derided, spit upon and shunned, he stands
The world's Pariah ; and to desert lands
Of bad society by custom driven,
Longing for social joys, he wanders unforgiven,
The scorn of some, a terror unto many,
Shunned by the great, and never cheered by any.
Onward he goes to learn the healing art,
Unmindful of the scandal-monger's dart,
Thrown to transfix its poison in his heart.

A wondrous soul is in him; he doth see
Good in the years that yet for him shall be,
And climbs the heights of knowledge to behold
Upon the mountain the great crock of gold,
Buried near Hope's bright rainbow; there he
learns

Fair nature's subtle laws; and he discerns
The promise in the egg; the tiny cell;
Beneath his searching glance, its tale doth tell
Of future being; with the shining knife
He cuts the tissues once built up by life,
And traces back effect unto its cause,
And solves enigmas and applies their laws.
He sees corruption blend with dust again
The glorious tenements, the homes of men,
Which life once nourished. The intricate brain,
From which thought ran in an unending chain,
Reading the secrets of a firmament
Where Boundless Power His love and beauty
spent,

His scalpel severs, and reveals the rare,
Frail instrument of knowledge. He doth spare
No organ; in that deep analysis,
Which draws up knowledge out of night's abyss,
Tissue from tissue he doth separate,
Till his brain reels beneath the awful weight
Of nature's marvel, man's mysterious frame,
Linked to that subtle and most delicate flame,
The human soul. In him the youthful heart
Beats strong with youthful passions; but the art
Which brings concealment from an act of guile
Is never his. The accomplished wretch may smile

Gazing upon the tenements so grand
In their last awful stillness; so his youth,
Eager for knowledge, leads him to the truth;
His buoyancy, like sap within the root,
Runs through life's cells to furnish fairest fruit
For life's ripe autumn. This it is doth speak
His future greatness; and o'er confines bleak
Of pain and misery he yet shall rise,
Star-like, with heavenly glory in his eyes,
To bid men hope, to soothe the anguished form
Writhing on sheets of suffering; with warm
And loving words, soothing the sick to sleep,
And drying eyes from which the hot tears creep,
Like rain in summer; he through life shall wend,
The sad one's soother and the sufferer's friend;
Blessed by the sick, whose praises write his name
Above him on the marble slab of Fame.

ADDRESS TO A STAR—A SOLILOQUY.

Still is the night. The darkness has descended—
Descended on my pathway like a veil
Which falls across the face when life has ended.
Above my head the radiant planets sail
Thro' heaven as ships on ocean. Now the gale
Comes, bearing the aroma summer yields
From blooming hill and flower-scented vale,
And lank, green grasses shimmering in the fields;
Then, with a good-night kiss, to other faces steal.
The katy-did, with low, monotonous warning,
Foretells the frosty days the earth shall see;

The cricket in the grass chirps of the morning
And all the sunny glory yet to be.

The sounds of nature are as pure and free
As nature's own appearance. While I rove
Beneath night's firmament, that boundless sea,
The deathless stars watch o'er me from above,
Brooding with eyes of pity and eternal love.

O, silvery star! Beneath thy radiant orb
The golden sunbeams of the sun are set;
Roll round thy circle and let light absorb
The darkness, where primeval night is yet
As in that æon when the Triune met
To fashion thee, thou signal of the night!

Roll—while men's little systems chafe and fret;
Roll on in calm, and from conceiveless height
Dispense on darker worlds thine everlasting light.

The history of our little world is thine;
Our deepest wisdom but a thought to thee;
For thou hast seen all races of mankind
Which time has swept into Eternity.

All things are lost within that boundless sea,
And thou hast seen them vanish one by one;
Of the dark past thou holdest the hidden key—
The past, which hides the mysteries man has done,
And evermore shall hide with every rounding sun.

As I now gaze, so doubtless gazed on thee
The first great parents of the human race;
Thy lucid beams descending tenderly
Upon each eager, knowledge-seeking face.
Night after night, perchance, they sought to
trace

Thy path along the sky, and 'neath thy light,
When sin had come, with slow and weary pace,
Mayhap, they passed from Eden into night,
And Paradise was lost forever to their sight.

Assyria passed before thee, and became
As though she ne'er had been. And Babylon,
As if to put all former thrones to shame,
Displayed her glittering glories to the sun.
Her valorous kings great power and honor won,
But thou didst shine after their sun had set;
Nineveh, the Proud, 'neath thee her course has
run ;

Thou sawest old Ocean's hoary billows fret
In those historic days as they are fretting yet.

The summits of the Pyramids to thee
Shone when thy slanting star-beams fell athwart
The sandy desert. It was thine to see
Great Egypt when she glowed the busy mart
Of all the nations. Thou didst cheer the heart
Of that great sculptor who has carved in stone
The glorious Sphinx—that masterpiece of art—
That watches on the desert there alone,
And preaches greater things than any human tone.

There Thebes and Heliopolis went out ;
Palmyra wasted 'neath Time's glittering sword ;
Religions recognized were put to doubt,
And gods forgotten that men once adored.
Wisdom flowed over Greece like water poured
From silver fountains, and Rome, unswept
By Frank or Vandal, precious knowledge stored

In many granaries, till Alaric leapt
Down from his mountain heights, and human cul-
ture slept.

Thus shrines have risen and shrines have fall'n
to dust;

Thus kings have ruled and kings have lost their
power,

And generations passed, as still they must
Until that last and world-dissolving hour.

Minds have met minds, and thus evolved the
flower

Of thought, and Science growing through the years
Has served to 'stablish an Eternal power
Which all the Universe of realms uprears,
Which made the worlds of space and guides them
in their spheres.

And as I gaze on thee my soul is taught
Of my Creator a grand simile ;

Thou seest all things that the years have wrought,
And yet thou art the same continually.

Thou roundest in thy orbit, and to me,
Even while I gaze, thy twinklings seem to play
With all the mildness of infinity,

Alike upon the upright in thy way,
And on the wicked wretch who, trembling, shuns
the day.

And I go forward, trusting, in my calm,
That thou reflectest some faint light which
shines

From the dear face of Him whose child I am.

About thee all my spirit intertwines,
And in each starry world my soul divines
That everlasting music which was made,
First, when the different stars took up their lines
Through that dark firmament where God has laid
The finger of His power, and all His power displayed.

Roll on ! Roll on forever ! Glorious sphere !
My deepest longings can not climb to thee,
For all my soul is passion-burdened here.
Gain thou—from every age—new mystery,
And gaining, nearer grow to Deity.
My faint hope is in some far age to grow
With master souls—and in new worlds to see
All that eternal spirits learn and know—
And walk upon thy breast as I walk earth below.

May, 1882.

THE GIRL I LOVE.

Dear as my life is she I love ;
She loves me for myself alone ;
Not wealth, or ancient pedigree,
Or blood descended from a throne ;
Her heart's a gentle, trusting heart ;
Her mind's a truthful loving mind ;
And she will bear an earnest share
In every care of human kind.

Her hands are ready unto good,
And through her suffering finds relief ;
She stills the heated strife of blood,
And dries the heart-felt tear of grief :

She is no brawler ; does not spread
The flames of gossip on the air ;
Her name unflecked, her self respect
And intellect shine everywhere.

I know not if she's beautiful,
But there's a glory in her eyes,
A light that's never sad or dull,
Chaste as the violet's vernal dyes ;
Her neck is stately, and her cheeks
Like pinks with modest crimson glow,
Her face is fair, her waving hair
Is rich and rare as flowers that blow.

And when in Hymen's chains we're bound
We'll trusting go adown life's river ;
And if the storm winds rudely blow
We still will trust and love forever.
With hearts still bent to golden deeds,
With minds e'er bright with nature's glow,
Though we are dust, we still will trust
That God, the Just, our way will show.

And if I had a prince's dower
I'd deck her with the costliest gems ;
And if I had a monarch's power
I'd crown her brow with diadems ;
But she who keeps an earnest soul
And honest heart in low estate,
Not Fortune's dower, nor silken bower,
With empress power, could make more great.

CARRIE LEE.

Sweet Carrie Lee! Dead Carrie Lee!
I bless and mourn the hour
Since first I felt the joy and bliss
That love's warm hand can shower;
It has been many years ago,
And you are far away;
But while I live, I'll ne'er forget
The time we played croquet.

I remember how the shady elms
Their leafy arms outspread,
And how the birds were caroling
Their songs above our head;
I remember how our merry laugh
Rang out so clear and gay,
Whene'er we missed the wickets
When playing at croquet.

The gossamers were floating,
Like silk threads on the breeze,
And summer zephyrs sighing
Among the old elm trees;
Behind us rose the pleasant hill,
The sky seemed far away,
And you and I were happy,
As we tried to play croquet.

I know I took your hand in mine,
And told you of my love;
The glory of your eyes did shine
Like angel's eyes above;

I bent my head to catch the sound
Of all that you might say,
And you know what your answer was,
And we forgot croquet.

Ah! many years have come and gone
Since you and I were there ;
Now I am lonely, and I seem
A stranger everywhere.
The joys have faded from my heart,
And not a thing seems gay,
But I can never quite forget
The time we played croquet.

Sweet Carrie Lee! Dead Carrie Lee !
I bless and mourn the hour
Since first I felt the joy and bliss
That Love's warm hand can shower ;
For you are with the angels now,
In an eternal day,
The games ye have are purer far
Than ever was croquet.

- SIC TRANSIT GLORIA.

She came like some full beam ;
She flashed upon my sight
Like glory in a dream,
Or meteor in the night ;
And then she passed, and night o'ercast
My Paradise of light.

Yet, still I seem to see
The outlines of her face ;

Her smiles are falling free,
And with angelic grace;
They lift the sad, and they make glad
The lowest of our race.

What land she wanders in
My spirit cannot tell;
But where she lingers, Sin
Is not, and Love doth dwell;
There every heart quells each base part,
And makes a heaven of hell.

I write this song as hers,
Who purifies and heals;
Who darkest paths prefers,
To set the blessed seals
Of joy and love and heaven above
On each poor heart which feels.

A HYMN.

How happy is the trusting soul
Of him who knows the Lord;
Eternal prospects bright unfold,
And constant joys afford.
His heart is filled with zeal for God
And love for all mankind;
He treads the path his Savior trod,
And leaves his sins behind.

The breeze from the eternal hills
Enlivens all the air;
He looks beyond life's cares and ills,
And knows that God is there.

Through all the varying scenes of life
He moves to grasp the crown ;
With sin he makes successful strife,
And heaven to him comes down.

Sure of a pure abiding-place
He counts earth's gifts as dross ;
Leaves life for his Redeemer's face,
And feels no sense of loss.

Up, up the steep and rugged hill
Of Truth he climbs to bliss,
And feels at last the endless thrill
Of Love's supernal kiss.

A SONG.

Sing not that song—it speaks of joys,

Alas ! long since departed ;

How can it thrill my life again

When I am broken hearted ?

The dove across the watery waste

Flies home with hope of land to-morrow ;

She bears the olive spray which brings

Joy to the eyes of weeping sorrow.

For me, alas ! sing not that song ;

It tells of joys long since departed,

And woe and pain alone remain,

Companions of the broken hearted.

For me, across life's dreary sea,

No messenger, returning,

Can bring one leaf to satisfy

My poor heart's ceaseless yearning.

The present thought of what we are,
And thinking of our young life's promise,
Reveals how sadly time will mar,
And tells what hopes were taken from us.
Then, oh! for me sing not that song;
It tells of joys long since departed,
And woe and pain alone remain,
Companions of the broken-hearted.

AS SPRINGS UNTO THEIR LEVELS RISE.

As springs unto their levels rise,
So upward springs the soul;
As buds betray their beauteous dyes,
Thus, unchecked, minds unfold,
And spirits of ambition quell
The powers of sung, or woven spell.
Waked into action, thought springs out
Swifter than beams of light:
Boundless by time, or space, or fate,
It ranges every height,
Rejoicing in immortal powers,
And fearless of the night.

THE WEARY POET.

There was a man—his name is naught—
I knew him once—I know him now—
Who searched the very soul of thought,
And placed fair wisdom on his brow:

Glad were his eyes ; fair Nature's face
Was unto him a silvered glass,
In which, in all her forms of grace,
He saw the sprite of knowledge pass.

The song of birds, the gleam of seas,
The scent of flowers ; each changing hue
Of autumn's tints upon the trees,
When drooped the year with age shot through ;

The emerald ferns in tangled brakes,
The gurgling song and silver sheen
Of some sweet brook, which softly takes
Its way to sea 'twixt banks of green,

Were all for him. His heart and frame
Caught all of Nature's wondrous glee,
And some sweet spirit sang of fame
Within his heart continually.

He sought to set his thoughts to speech ;
He pleased the world, his music rang,
And all admired his power to teach,
Cheered by the glorious strains he sang.

Ah ! woe for him ! His dream has fled ;
His life is changed ; his hope is o'er ;
The strains the nightingale has shed
Will startle from his throat no more.

By adverse currents tossed about,
Beaten by billows from the strand,
He roams upon a sea of doubt,
With memories of a better land,

And one faint hope, that mid new scenes,
Of greener lands and milder spring,
Each cloud shall fade that intervenes
And sweeter songs be his to sing—
Where purer breezes fan the hills,
And under skies more fair and broad,
The muse which through his nature thrills
May wake a song that pleases God.

THE HUSBAND TO HIS DEAD WIFE.

'Tis many a weary day, love,
Since you were by my side ;
I'm thinking o'er how long it's been
Since you became my bride :
My memory goes roaming back
O'er our short life of glee,
And though the world may call you dead,
You are not dead to me.

I sit beside my chimney place,
And read my books alone ;
I fancy I can hear your step
Upon the old hearth-stone :
I feel your spirit at my side,
And long to hear you speak ;
Again your eyes gaze into mine,
My kiss falls on your cheek.

We had our trials—who has not,
Who treads this changing sphere ?
We had our woes—where is the eye
Tears have not moistened here ?

O'er baby forms hot tears were shed,
Our prayers too rose on high
To God, to guard our darlings dead,
And bear them to the sky.

Now thou art gone, and there remains,
Through all my coming years,
The sense of loneliness, the pains
Of woe, the bitter tears
For pleasure past:—the power to pray
That we again shall meet,
Where Love eternal lights the way
At the dear Savior's feet.

No more on earth I'll see your face,
Except through Fancy's aid ;
For in my dreams at night I trace
Thy features there displayed :
And though men tell me you are dead,
With me you still must live
In every holy memory
That love and youth can give.

REST AT HOME.

A SONG.

There is work for all to do,
Then there's rest at home ;
We must toil life's journey through,
Then there's rest at home.
Rest at home ; rest at home ;
We shall see our Father's face
When we rest at home.

There's the orphan's tears to dry,
Then there's rest at home ;
We must check the mourner's sigh,
Then there's rest at home,
Rest at home ; rest at home ;
We shall have our Father's smile
When we rest at home.

Nestled in the arms of love,
When we rest at home ;
Endless joy around, above,
When we rest at home.
Rest at home ; rest at home ;
God will bid our sighing cease
When we rest at home.

THE YEARS OF THE LONG AGO.

The April winds were blowing,
And the violet in bloom,
And the daisy, and the cherry,
Exhaling sweet perfume ;
Way down in the grassy pasture,
Where the earliest flowers blow,
I met my future destiny,
In the years of the long ago.
And the sweet smiles rippled over
Her face, so fair and true ;
Long and black was her wavy hair,
Her eyes the deepest blue :
Her form was faultlessly perfect ;
And her voice was so soft and low,

I loved her when first I met her,
In the years of the long ago.

Together we rambled often,
And time flew fast away ;
Sweet April passed, and we two basked
In the bright sunshine of May :
I felt that aching of the heart
Which only true lovers know ;
When I thought that we must separate,
In the years of the long ago.

Thus passed away the month of May,
And in the month of June
I told her the true love of my heart,
Beneath the rounded moon ;
I told her all my love for her,
'Neath the moon-beams' radiant glow,
And she told me that she loved me,
In the years of the long ago.

Thus through the drowsy summer days,
Wiling away the hours ;
Watching the golden butterflies
Sipping dew from the flowers ;
Bathed in the light of sunset,
We watched the bright river flow ;
Thus days flew on 'till summer was gone,
In the years of the long ago.

Our hearts beat high and merrily,
To love's soft, pleasant strain ;
We did not know the wine of bliss
Was mixed in the cup of pain ;

Nor did we think such joy as ours
Would be darkened by clouds of woe,
For we knew not of the reaper—Death—
In the years of the long ago.

* * * * *

The elm leaves were dripping
With dews of an Autumn morn,
The winds of the mild September
Were rustling the golden corn,
When a pall of sable velvet,
And a face as white as the snow,
Were borne from the low-roofed farm house,
In the years of the long ago.

They laid her 'neath the cedar tree,
The cedar ever green ;
And her grave lies toward the yellow fields,
Which lusty reapers glean ;
And beyond are the giant mountains,
With their peaks of glistening snow,
And dark pines lining their jagged base,
And a river rolling below.

Alas ! our dream of happiness !
Alas ! our faded dream !
Life is a phantom—a shadow—
And love—a vanishing gleam.
The years are a blank without an aim,
For my heart is so full of woe ;
All I can do is weep when I think
Of the years of the long ago.

She is gone away beyond recall,
And I walk the hills alone;
No more shall I hear her silv'ry laugh,
No more be cheered by her tone;
And so my face is still and calm,
For my sorrow I will not show,
But my heart love was buried with her
In the years of the long ago.

THE GIRL I MET IN CALICO.

I met her in the summer time,
When earth was clad in gorgeous livery,
When every streamlet spake a rhyme
That lulled my senses into reverie;
The meadows were all green around,
I felt the tender breezes blowing,
She smiled upon me like a star
Upon a darkened pathway glowing.

REFRAIN.

The girl I met in calico—The girl I met in calico—
I never, never can forget the girl I met in calico.

Her eyes were bright as summer dew
That hangs upon the rose at morning;
Her hair was like the golden fringe
The feathery summer cloud adorning;
Her cheeks were like the peaches' bloom;
Like buds her pouting lips were swelling;
Her laugh was like the sound of bells
At evening o'er the waters knelling.

REFRAIN.—The girl I met, etc.

We sat together in the groves,
We heard the partridge calling;
The noisy flutter of the birds
Mingled with distant waters falling;
The pheasant drummed up on the log;
The jay-bird called, the woods resounded,
And our low voices rose and joined
With the soft noises that surrounded.

REFRAIN.—The girl I met, etc.

We walked together o'er the mead,
And rested 'neath the bowers;
Our souls did not espy the weeds
Which grew among life's flowers;
Our love was like a rapid stream
Which flows to join the mighty river,
Down lapsing to the sea of love
Which rolls around the world forever.

REFRAIN.—The girl I met, etc.

So unto her my heart was given;
To her that heart is leal;
She is the sun of life's small heaven,
All else is the unreal.
And while my bounding blood shall surge,
Till death's dark wave shall overflow,—
I'll love unto life's farthest verge
The girl I met in calico.

REFRAIN.—The girl I met, etc.

May, 1877.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice is related by the Latin poets Virgil and Ovid.

Orpheus is a musician and poet of Grecian mythology, who possessed the divine gift of moving animate and inanimate objects by the power of his song. Crazed by the loss of Eurydice, he obtains permission to seek her in Pluto's realm, the God of the infernal regions, and brother of Jupiter and Saturn.

Here he witnesses the sufferings of the condemned. Sisyphus rolling a great stone up an endless height; Ixion bound to the wheel; Tantalus eternally cursed with hunger and thirst; the Furies; Cerberus, the great three-headed watch dog of hell; the Belides striving to carry water in leaky urns; all types of beings who suffer in the Grecian hell.

The result of Orpheus' mission I have striven to give in the following lines:

When gathering night
Shuts out the light,
And hides the landscape from my sight,
Fond memory
Brings back to me
Legends of Greece and Italy.

I read once more
The stories o'er
That thrilled my heart in days of yore ;
Along my brain
They creep and chain
My mind, and thrill my heart again.

That ancient time
Of love and crime,
When blood was hot as the summer's clime ;
When Greece was free,
Or Italy
Sat, queenlike, ruling land and sea.

* * * * *

The firelight dies ;
Weird shadows rise ;
Deep slumber settles o'er my eyes.
I dream and see
The misery
Of Orpheus and Eurydice.
I hear his prayer
Rise on the air
For one removed so young and fair.
His plaintive cry
Pierces the sky
And thrills the hearts of Gods on high.
And o'er his head
These words are shed :
"Go seek her mid the shadowy dead ;
Where horrors creep
Pluto doth keep
The souls of those who fall asleep."

* * * * *

He did not wait ;
He passed the gate
Dividing men from future state ;
Unawed by fear,
Through regions drear
He passed in love's fond search for her—
The one beloved—
So late removed
From scenes where they together roved.
Through regions vast
He boldly passed
Where death rode on each chilling blast ;

Forms fierce and grim,
Though vague and dim,
Along his path frowned down on him.
Through these he came
'Till light and flame
Revealed the misery and shame
Of Pluto's land.
On every hand
Stern shapes in awful grandeur stand ;
To whom are given
The spirits driven
By judgment from the fields of heaven ;
Those who, unblessed,
Find not their rest
Among the "Islands of the Blessed."
Before him shone
Great Pluto's throne,
Circled with fire—a mount of stone.

* * * * *

There frowned the chief,
Nor pain, nor grief,
Through him had ever known relief.
And filling air
Were spirits there
Who through all space his mandates bear.
A hateful brood
The Furies stood,
Laughing in hellish solitude.
Hell's hideous hound
Bayed, and around
Through caves of night echoed the sound.

Through all that drear,
Vague vast, the ear
The sigh, the groan, the moan could hear.
Faces of woe
Earth can not show,
And ne'er has shown, toiled there below ;
Tantalus there
Drooped in despair.
A cooling stream ran fresh and fair,
And yet in vain
He strove to gain
The brink and quench his thirst and pain.
Whirling fore'er
In anguish drear,
Ixion rose and fell in air.
No hope of rest
E'er thrilled his breast—
Amid the unblessed most unblessed.
Against his will—
But rolling still
Up the steep grade of a high hill
A massive stone
To heights unknown—
Toiled Sisypheus, with grief and groan.
No rest, no peace—
There never cease
The pangs of ill—there no release
The soul can cheer—
There pain and fear
Vibrate the sulphurous atmosphere.

* * * * *

Dark Pluto gazed,
Dismayed, amazed,
On Orpheus—then his features blazed
With deadly hate;
“Rise, Queens of Fate,
And seize this child of earthly state,
Who, undismayed,
Has dared invade
In mortal guise this nether shade;
For ’tis designed
The human mind
‘That enters here leaves hope behind.’”

But what is this?
A note of bliss
Sweeps through the desolate abyss.
Oh, blissful noise!
’Tis Orpheus’ voice,
Which makes the fiends of hell rejoice.

In music’s chains
Pluto remains
Bound to his throne, forgetting pains;
While powerless
To writhe or hiss
The dragon listens, lulled with bliss.

Still swelled the song
O’er that fierce throng;
It rose sublime and echoed long,
Clear as a lark
Which flies to mark
The rising dawn while yet ’tis dark.

So his notes leaped
Like light, and swept
Through hell's dark depths. The Furies wept
For the first time.
The song sublime
Rolled on and purified of crime

The souls of hell.
Sweet as a bell,
Now faint, now loud arose the swell
Of every note
From that clear throat,
Upon whose breath Love lay afloat

Like some frail bark
On waters dark,
Drifting with nought but stars to mark
Its onward course.
The baying, hoarse,
Of Cerberus was stilled. The force

Of hell, which chained
Ixion, deigned
To pause awhile, and then remained ;
Enchanted by
The melody,
Sisyphus checked the stone on high.

The wave accursed
No longer nursed
In Tantalus his awful thirst ;
Unheeded by
The stream did fly,
Nor woke the memory of a sigh.

He touched each heart
And made depart
Each bitter pang. He stilled the smart
Of years of pain,
And love again
Thrilled through the soul and roused the brain.

His fervid theme
Was love ; the dream
Of dawning youth. When life did seem
A holiday—
And far away
Sorrow upon the horizon lay.

“But now,” sang he,
“She walks by me,
Searching for my Eurydice.
Come back to me !
Come back to me !
My own beloved Eurydice !”

And love’s sweet word
Flew like a bird
Through regions dark. The maiden heard.
Loosed from her foes
Her spirit rose
Upon his breast to find repose ;
Like light she swept,
She ran, she leaped
Into his arms, and there she wept ;
As a scared dove
From storms above
Flies to its home, she sought her love.

Then Pluto cried :

“Take thou thy bride ;

For love is stronger than the tide

Of Death’s cold wave ;

Beyond the grave

The hand of love doth reach and save.”

Yet hark to Fate :

“Pass through the gate

Dividing men from future state.

Forsake this shade ;

Lead thou the maid

And look not back—a curse is laid

“On him who flies

To other skies,

Yet at the verge of Paradise

Turns back to view

Scenes just passed through,

When all before is bright and new.

“And so in hell

Doth work the spell:

If ye turn not all will be well—

But if ye fail,

To this dark vale

The maid returns to weep and wail.”

He clasped her form,

He placed his arm

About her shoulders soft and warm ;

He kissed her cheek,

And pure and meek

Her great love mantled on her cheek.

"Lead on," said she ;
Then started he
From that low vale of misery ;
Forward he fled,
As swift she sped
Behind him from the shadowy dead.

His song beguiled
The passage wild,
And still enchained the demons smiled.
No stop, no stay—
They make their way
Through regions vast ; at last the day

Blesses their eyes ;
Before them rise
Some gloomy hills ; beyond them lies
Sweet Liberty.
O, they shall be
So happy when from Death set free !

And gladly she
Doth follow ; he
Up the steep hill climbs toilfully.
Thrilled with delight
He gains the height,
And thoughtless turns : that moment night
Fell over all,
Like a great pall.
His anxious love had turned to call
Her name too soon ;
The precious boon
Won by the melody of tune

Was lost—and she,
 Eurydice,
 Could never, never more be free.
 Back—back, Fate led;
 His arms were spread
 To catch her, but in vain; the dread,
 Strong will of Fate
 Drew her. Too late
 He realized with awful weight
 His thoughtless act:
 She slow retracked
 The path just passed; all anguish racked
 Her glorious face,
 Yet he could trace
 Forgiveness there; with weary pace
 She slow returned;
 His bosom yearned
 To follow her. Her last look burned
 Like a great light,
 For pure and bright
 Love crimsoned o'er each feature white.
 Then the fair face
 Sank into space,
 And darkness reigned without a trace
 Of his dear one.
 His dream was done:
 Eternal night shut out the sun.
 * * * * * *
 Now, evermore,
 He haunts the shore,
 Calling the maiden o'er and o'er.

By rippling rills,
O'er verdant hills,
At eventide his sad voice thrills.
The azure sea
And verdant lea
Echo his cry: "Come back to me.
Eurydice—
Eurydice—
My own beloved, come back to me!"

VISION OF POVERTY.

A JOURNEY INTO THE REALMS OF FANCY.

I had a vision while I slept:
Night's ebon shades around me crept,
While wandering lovers softly stept,
 And crushed the dew;
And the eternal planets swept
 The boundless blue.
Fair Fancy passed before my face;
She bade me rise and leave my place;
She whispered, "You have found my grace,
 And I will show
The airy realms of endless space
 My footsteps know."
Her face was that of one I knew,
With whom I walked life's journey through,
Whose heart to mine beat ever true;
 On whom the breath
Of him who rides the pale steed blew,
 Whom men call Death.

Joyous I rose and followed her ;
Her voice made music in my ear ;
The air was rich with cloves and myrrh
 And cassia buds,
And bright birds' songs came sweet and clear
 From dark, green woods.

Through long, dark curves of emerald shade,
In silvery gleams, the moonlight played ;
Some fairy hand a home had made
 Of endless bliss,
And Love on Beauty's lip had laid
 His purest kiss.

I walked where every thing was fair ;
There fell no shadow of despair ;
Frail spires uprose and pierced the air ;
 An opal glow
Fell from the heavens, bathing there
 All things below.

We wandered through that perfect light ;
It was not day—yet was not night ;
But all things shone around me bright,
 Above—beneath—
Until a spectre met my sight
 As grim as death.

Full armed she was and glowered in wrath ;
She stood as to dispute my path ;
Her eyes such eyes as hunger hath,
 A flaming gleam ;
And through her body on the strath
 Fell light's pale beam.

There was no flesh on any bone;
The skin their whiteness hid alone;
Her face was flinty as the stone
 Beneath her feet.

If mercy in her visage shone
 I could not see't.

Forth from her back two pinions grew,
And, as she shook them, round me flew
A scorching, blistering, poisoning dew,
 Which, as it fell,
Kindled each thought my spirit knew
 With dreams of Hell.

Her dress was scant, her limbs were bare,
A grizzled gray her wandering hair;
Her mocking laugh upon the air
 Rose wild and free:
I named her, while it echoed there,
 Fell Poverty.

"What seek ye here?" the vision cried:
"Turn back, this rolling world is wide
With many paths. The restless tide
 Of human life
Bears other waves on which to ride
 From its dark strife."

In fiendish tones her mocking laugh
Rolled down across my future path,
Waking the echoes with its wrath;
 And twilight grey,
With weirder scenes than darkness hath,
 Fell round my way.

I looked around, and where, before,
Soft lawns stretched on from shore to shore,
Huge hills oak-crowned loomed up, and o'er
 My head were hung:
From lofty peaks I heard the roar
 Of th' thunder's tongue.

Then slowly all around my feet,
As warmed by some volcanic heat,
Like some great heart with steady beat,
 Graves seemed to rise,
Rounded and formed for head and feet,
 To fright my eyes.

Nothing but graves were round me spread,
And then it seemed the vision said:
"These sons of flame, Poverty fed,
They wandered, often wanting bread,
 Yet felt their powers:
From them fair Fortune ever fled,
Yet, Ignis-fatuus like, still led
 To these cold bowers;

"When, reft of hope and void of Fame,
Unwarmed by any generous flame,
The laugh of fools, as cold and tame
 As is this stone,
They fell my victims; Scorn and Shame
 Were theirs alone.

"And now I warn you to turn back:
Why seek for fame? this devious track
Leads unto darkness; and the rack
 Of grief and pain

Waits for the wanderer in this black
And dreary plain."

I turned my eyes: my guardian sprite
Rose up before me, tall and white—
A vision beautiful and bright:

On me she smiled,
As when a mother with delight
Fondles her child.

And then I heard the deathless song
Chanted by those whose wills were strong;
Who fought and struggled against wrong,
Though weak and poor;
Whose spirits led the world along
Till life was o'er:

Who trod each bold oppressor down
In every land, wherever found;
Who raised the suppliant from the ground,
And broke his bands,
And made earth ring with Freedom's sound
Through all her lands:

Who wrote their names on unstained scrolls—
Great human-loving, generous souls;
Who, while th' earth in its orbit rolls,
Shall ever live
Upon that banner's precious folds,
Which fame doth give:

Who fought the battles of the just;
Who raised their lives above the dust;
Who died in action, not with rust;
Whose souls of flame

Gave back to God His precious trust,
And felt no shame.

There Goldsmith lay entombed in rest;
Montgomery slumbered with the blest;
Keats, Chatterton and White were dressed
In winding sheet;
And Burns, the strongest, sweetest, best,
Did all complete.

And myriad other names were there,
Of those who clomb life's tedious stair,
And wrote their names upon the fair
And virgin page;
Whose names, immortal, thrill the air
Of every age.

Then said I, "Spite of poisonous dew,
Which over me so late ye threw,
Spite of the grave's surrounding you,
Spite of the dead,
That glorious land I mean to view
Where Fancy led."

She seemed to faint or fade away;
I cannot tell; she did not stay;
She passed from sight: the twilight gray
Blushed into light;
The hills sank down, and morning lay
Around me bright.

Out of the still and golden air
There came a moaning of despair,
And then I heard a voice declare:
"O, worthy son

Of those who climb life's mystic stair,
March boldly on!

"Still dream thy everlasting dreams;
Make right the subject of thy themes;
Fear nothing here that is or seems,
For thou shalt rise
To bathe in Fame's eternal streams,
And walk the skies."

THE LAND OF SOLITUDE.

Morn trembled on the horizon;
The iridescent tint of dawn
Blushed over dewy hill and lawn,
And round me lay.
A mild breeze from the south was drawn,
By rising day.

Beloved Fancy walked with me,
With joyous smiles: "I go with thee,
For thou art worthy. Happy he
Who, brave as thou,
Faces his foes unfearingly;
Truth lights his brow."

But see, the tint of morning dies,
Vague darkness falls across our eyes,
And a new land all silent lies
Before our feet,
Where every hope, or pleasure flies,
And shadows meet.

Slowly around us seemed to fall
A shadow like a funeral pall;
A pallor settled over all—
 A ghostly glare,
And moaning voices seemed to call
 Along the air.

We hurried on; a rugged road
Wound through the hills; the bat and toad
Greeted our eyes; the fox-fire glowed
 Ghastly and chill,
And streams all phosphorescent flowed
 To seas as still

As is the tomb; a river wide
Wound round a mountain's jagged side
With listless current; and it died
 In a lone sea,
Unstirred by breeze, or sail, or tide,
 Eternally.

No bark upon that awful sea
Had ever floated fair, or free,
From curving lea to curving lea,
 Or caught a breeze,
Or rested calm and quietly
 In listless ease.

No sail with sounding crack had fanned
The atmosphere; no sailor hand
Had thrown the sound; no sturdy hand,
 In search of shore,
With eager gaze had sighted land
 Ever before.

No human voice across the deep
Had waked the beaches from their sleep ;
No eye gazed down some rocky steep
 When day had fled,
Nor woman bent with woe to weep
 Above the dead.

Continually the light remained
One constant thing : no sunbeam stained
The eastern sky ; and never waned
 A dying moon ;
No insect in that land complained
 With dolorous tune.

“ Within the shadow of this wood
No human foot e’er dared intrude ;
Here dwells the Spirit of Solitude,”
 Exclaimed my guide.

“ Here, by no wave of life pursued,
 She comes to hide.”

I saw the figure of a maid,
Pensive, reclined in that deep shade ;
Her elbow on a rock was stayed,
 And in her hand
Her small and shapely head was laid :
 Her pose was grand.

Her ebon tresses floated free,
Down to her white and curving knee ;
Her snowy waist I could not see,
 So rich and rare,
Like silk, swept down luxuriantly
 Her heavy hair.

Her face was thoughtful ; yet no care,
Or pain, or joy, was printed there :
Time swept away, yet did not wear
Her heart or face.

The years went by, but foul or fair
They left no trace.

Slowly her heavy eyes were turned
Upon me, and as one who yearned
Companionship she asked and learned
My name and choice ;
And then I heard, in words which burned,
Her glorious voice.

She spake to woo me, and each word
Was sweet as tender music heard
At midnight ; when some island bird
Wakes in a copse,
And, fluttering, from his wings are stirred
Night's diamond drops.

Then, while the stars keep watch o'er earth,
Joyously pours his whole soul forth
In gladsome tones, telling the birth
In yonder nest,
How love doth span the round world's girth,
And make us blest.

“ Wander no more : why seek when thou canst rest ?
Wander no more : in solitude is bliss—
And he who knows not care is truly blest.
Wander no more : abide and take my kiss
Upon thy lips. Why search for joy or fame,
Or wealth, or pleasure ? They evade the grasp,

And leave behind them naught but age and shame—
Life's vernal ivy poisoned by the asp.

“Wander no more : here comes no breath of care,
Nor caulking memories ; here the soul is stilled
By Lethean winds, which fluctuate the air ;
With sweet contentment, here, the mind is filled ;
Here never storm of strife doth strike or sweep,
And sorrow never fills the eyes with tears,
But sweet Oblivion lulls the brain to sleep,
And life glides by unmindful of the years.

“Tarry with me. Come—I will lay my arms
Around thy neck ; and I will kiss thy cheek,
And I will soothe thy soul with magic charms ;
And when thy heart desires it I will speak ;
And lulled in slumber here we two shall lie,
Clasped in each other's arms, unknowing strife,
Beneath this silent and unchanging sky,
Finding in solitude the bliss of life.”

So sweet her voice, I seemed to feel
A peaceful calm around me steal ;
Her beauty set a subtle seal
Upon my brain ;
But Fancy, watching for my weal,
Spake in soft strain :

“Beware her : this is but deceit ;
There is no pleasure at her feet ;
Who truly lives in Peace must meet
The world and fight ;
No man from duty dare retreat
Into the night.

“No hero will from duty shirk ;
The earth demands his truest work ;
Only the laggard cares to lurk
 In listless ease ;
Better to face the storm and murk
 Of raging seas.”

Her face to purest beauty grew ;
I gazed upon it, and I knew
The words she spoke were strong and true :
 I left the maid
Reclining, and on swift steps flew
 From that strange shade.

Out of the shadows of the wood
Where that pale spirit loves to brood,
Painting the joys of Solitude,
 I passed with pain—
And in a new land I renewed
 My heart again.

THE LAND OF MUSIC.

We came unto a rolling land,
Where swelling hills on every hand
Stretched toward the azure sky. The bland
 And scented breeze
Of spring blew, bearing murmurs grand
 Of distant seas.

'Twas eventide ; the sun hung low
In the far west ; the gladsome flow
Of waters lulled me, and below,

From the abyss,
Through trees I heard the zephyrs blow
Their notes of bliss.

"This," said my guide, and gazed at me,
"Is the fair realm of melody,
Pass through: within it you shall be
Thrilled into peace.

Be glad: Here music wellet free,
Here passions cease.

"'Tis here the heart is lifted far
Above itself. Here shines the star
Of blessed Hope. The endless war
Man makes with pain
Is quieted; and here souls are
Happy again."

Then faint, but welling louder, I
Heard low-breathed music passing by:
From infinite recesses of sky

The numbers came—
Such songs as spirits sing on high
When free from blame.

Something to touch the human heart,
And bid the baser thoughts depart;
Sweet notes that bore no touch of art,
And yet which make
The crystal tears of feeling start
When our hearts ache.

I felt the tender music run
Along my frame, in unison
With all my soul. My hopes were won.

I thought, at last,
Cecilia's sweetest threads were spun
To bind me fast.

The breeze which through the forest played
Made melody. The tree tops swayed
To perfect time. The rivers made
Music sublime.

And melody swept o'er the glade
In endless rhyme.

"I will stay here!" at last I cried,
In joyous accents to my guide.

"Ye cannot linger," she replied :

"The hand of Fate
Pushes us onward, and we glide
To a new state."

And then I saw the vision pass,
Like to a molten stream of glass :
The sunlit hills rose up like brass,
And passed me by ;
And long and level fields of grass
Stretched 'neath my eye.

The tender music died away :
I looked, and saw a broad plain lay,
Endless and calm. The dying day
Gleamed red and passed,
And in the east the twilight gray
Rose thick and fast.

A subtle perfume blessed the brain
From flower and blossom. All the plain
Was flecked with bloom : the spring-time rain

Had kissed the grass :
The rich aroma strove in vain
To rise and pass.

Up from the east a leaden shade
Rose slowly : backward swept dismayed
The sunset glare, as if afraid
To meet and fight
With the dark legions stern arrayed
By sable night.

Twilight fell over us. We trod
The verge of that lone land : the sod
No human foot had pressed. All awed
Upon that plain,
I passed toward the horizon : God
Smiled on us again.

Venus flashed out into the sky ;
Belted Orion kissed my eye ;
The Pleiades shone faint on high ;
And, far and bright,
The sun-star Sirius rose to try
A war with night.

Shrilly, from a far distant hill,
Sang a complaining whip-poor-will,
In a discordant fitful trill.

All else beside,
Around us, was as calm and still
As death's chill tide :

The silent night, the depths of space,
The shadows falling on my face,
Wakened my awe, and left their trace

Upon my cheek.
Thought followed thought in lively chase :
I could not speak.

'Neath Nature's roof I felt how small,
How weak, how frail was man ; where all
Creation moves unto the call
Of boundless Power,
And heaven's drops of goodness fall
In endless shower.

I know not if we moved : I know
The plain passed by us, swift, or slow ;
And far away I noticed, low
In the dark night,
An unknown object rise and grow
Upon my sight.

" Whether we move, or whether stay,"
Gently I heard sweet Fancy say,
" That castle old, antique and gray,
Our eyes shall see ;
Within its halls all spirits stray
With Memory."

[These three poems ("Vision of Poverty," "The Land of Solitude," "The Land of Music,") are parts of a poem which will be completed at some future time.—AUTHOR.]

"THAT YEARLING BRINDLE STEER."

" Good morning, Mizez Johnson ;
I'm well ; how do you do ?
Thank you, yes'm ; I'll take a cheer,
But can't stay long wi' you.

I'm out travelin' this mornin',
And thought I'd step down here
And ask if you'd seed nothin'
Of a yearlin' brindle steer.

"I turned him out six weeks ago,
Along o' about six head;
When I turned him out that mornin',
My Martha Jane, she sed:
'I wouldn't be a bit surprized
If that calf don't come back,
For he never wuz turned out afore,
And it don't know our pack.'

"Wall, I turned 'em out that mornin',
Just arter a shower o' rain,
And the last time I seed on 'em
They wuz in Curtis' lane;
And that wuz about three hours
Arter I'd turned 'em out,
And that they'd be up that evenin'
I didn't hev no doubt.

"But sure enough, when evenin' come,
That brindle steer warn't thar;
But I sent Jo Williams arter him,
And I didn't hev no fear
But he'd be down to Curtis';
But Jo come back right soon
And sed that calf warn't at Curtis's
No mor'en he was in the moon.

"Now whar that calf hez gone to
Iz a mystery to me;

'N I never think bad o' no man,
But Jeems Rogers sed he see
Curtis a drivin' a pack o' steers
Up to Granville town;
'N he sed he'd state, at the risk o' his ears,
One o' them calves wuz brown.

"Now I don't say bad o' no man,
Fur I like to think the best;
'N I ain't never had no trouble
With Curtis, or the rest;
But that Curtis, Mizez Johnson,
Iz a mystery to me;
He'd as soon make a trade with a nigger
Ez trade with you or me.

"Last fall I hed an old black mare,
Her age were twenty year;
Curtis hed wanted to trade fur the brute
For more, or less 'n a year:
So he cum foolin' aroun' my house,
An' sez to me, sez ee,
'I'll give a calf'n sum oats fur the jade,
If you want to trade wi' me.'

"I sed I didn't want no calf—
The mar' warn't fit to trade—
But, by Jing! he kep' a coaxin' me,
'N at last, to stop his head,
I told him praps some day I'd come
To see his calf 'n oats,
'N then he toddled home, fur he sed
He had to pen some shotes.

“ One day I had to take a trip
Across to Harper’s place ;
I didn’t expect, when I started,
To look on Curtis’ face ;
But while passing through his orchard
The old man hollered ; ‘ Scott,
Ef you want to see that calf o’ mine,
He’s down here in the lot.’

“ There wuz a calf a standin’ by,
’N I pintoed to the beast,
’N asked him ef ’twuz large ez that,
’N de sed, ‘almost at least.’
’N I told him I wuz feeble,
’N wouldn’t go down to see ;
’N I sed no more to Curtis,
’N he sed no more to me.

“ So I went on to Harper’s,
’N then I cum back home.
Next day I wuz sowin’ medder,
When who but Curtis cum,
And sot and sot till dinner time,
’N boned me for a trade ;
He’d give me twenty bushels o’ oats
’N thet calf o’ his fur the jade.

“ Well, finally I consented,
’N the ’greement thet we made
Wuz, Curtis wuz to take the mare
’N fetch the things he said ;
’N so on thet ’ere evenin’
A boy o’ Curtis come,

Leadin' a calf with a halter
To take the old mare home.

" 'N such a calf! it warn't half
As big ez the one I seen!
I kinder blamed myself jes then
Fur havin' been so green:
But I knew the man wuz a Yankee,
'N thort I'd let it go,
Fur you never see no sort o' good
Cum from a Yankee, you know.

" For a Yankee, Mizez Johnson,
Is natur's meanest man:
I think when God made 'Adam,
He hed a difrunt plan
On which he made the Yankee.
'N heaven, I think I know,
Will not be such a plezant place
If a Yankee hez a show.

" Nex mornin' I chanced to be away—
I'd just went over to Sam's;
But I kinder thought that Curtis
Would be up to some more shams;
So when at last I did get back,
I wasn't much surprized
To find thet Curtis had brought the oats,
Nor to find he had disguised,

" The truth about the grain I got,
Fur it was spilt with must:
When I seed that, Mizez Johnson,
I wuz mad enough to bust;

Fur thet Curtis, Mizez Johnson,
Aint any sort o' good ;
He'd ruther trade with a nigger
'N a white man, if he could.

"Nex day he took the ole black jade,
And went up west sumwhar,
'N traded with a cullered man
Fur quite a likely mar'.
They say he told the nigger
The ole mar's age wuz nine ;
Thet the man he got her from sed so,
An' swore thet she wuz fine.

'N now that he hez made a spec,
'N got my yearlin' calf,
'N a filley for his musty oats,
Why he leans back to laff
At the way he beat the ole man,
'N beat the nigger too,
Fur he enjoys cheatin' a nigger as much
Az cheatin' me or you.

"No, I thank you, Mizez Johnson,
I guess I'll get on back ;
But if I find that yearlin' steer
Along o' Curtis' pack,
I'll make it so orful hot for him
He'll wish he wuz away :
No, I guess I can't stay to dinner :
Come down right soon. Good day !"

MABEL ELLERSLIE.

Jane Ellerslie was old and poor—
She lived in a hut on a lonely moor ;
A lonely moor, though a public road
Curved down by the hut where she abode.
She was a widow with but one child—
A maiden beautiful and mild,
Just blushing into womanhood—
A beautiful maiden, pure and good.

All unknowing worldly ways
Mabel Ellerslie passed her days,
Watching the shadows cross the moor,
As the long grass waved, and round the door
She planted the purple heather bloom,
And the modest pansy. The rich perfume
Of the pale wild rose stole through the grass
To bless and encircle the modest lass.

She and her mother tilled a spot
Of land that lay around their little cot,
And living cheaply day by day
Contrived to keep the wolf away.
The moor was noted for its game,
And many a hunter in spring-time came
To hunt the fowl that rested there ;
For in hunting season the very air

Was dark with flocks of water hens,
And ducks and geese, that sought the fens
For rich wild seed. The hunters, they
Would pass the hut, and sometimes stay

To get a meal. It came to pass
That many admired the comely lass,
And would often pause to pass a word,
For Mabel was blithe as a singing bird.

So wore her early life away,
And thus, at last, one bright spring day,
A hunter came with an honest air,
With smiling eyes and cheeks as fair
As the maiden's own—a manly grace
Proclaiming him of a well-born race.
He told the mother his dwelling lay
In a great city far away,

Where forever rushed the mighty tide
Of trade and commerce. Mabel heard,
Hungrily drinking every word;
Her eyes grew wide, and she longed for wings
To fly and see these wonderful things.
He, able all her wonder to trace,
Marking the beauty of her pure face,
Resolved to wile the time away

On the lonely moor. So from day to day
He never failed to visit the cot—
He spoke of the beauty of the spot,
The many charms of the lonely place,
And gazing into Mabel's face,
Praised her beauty—her queenly grace,
Claimed her affection, won her heart,
Acting in all an unmanly part.

Oh! saddest words for truth to tell,
He won her affections, and she fell.

Mabel Ellerslie, fair and bright,
Shut out from her soul the life and light
Of truth and virtue, and her name
Was linked with the foulest words of shame.
For the laws of Nemesis are the same,
"Murder will out," and so will shame.

Her poor mother, so crushed and tried,
Lingered awhile heart-broken and died.
The sweet-faced villain went away
To seek new victims, and she, once gay
And pure as the sunbeam that sought her door,
And fell in glory along her floor,
Knowing no place where she might fly
For rest and shelter, resolved to die.

Forth she rushed where the stream crept slow,
And plunged in the waves that lay below—
All of life once bright and fair
Passing away, but her golden hair
Lay like a halo around her breast
When they drew her forth from her place of rest.
And strong men wept and women cried
O'er the beautiful face of her who died.

What of it all? Is this the end?
Will not Nature this crime amend?
God his eternal watches keeps,
And the eye of Justice never sleeps.
Somewhere Purity shall write
This maiden's name in clearest light,
Somewhere Virtue shall rise and tell
Because she loved was why she fell.

Somewhere the widow shall wake and see
The child she loved, as pure and free
As when she bore her, for the pain
Of Love betrayed makes pure again.

Somewhere God's destroying spark
Shall strike the villain through the dark.
Into his soul the curse be driven—
The brand of Cain descend from heaven—
For God his eternal watches keeps,
And the eye of Justice never sleeps.

EGYPT AND THE SPHINX.

Along this great blue river—this famed Nile—
In this mysterious Egypt now I stray,
And on its classic banks I rest awhile,
O'erburdened by the glare of the fierce ray
That beats upon the sand this cloudless day;
And the clear sky above me, deeply blue,
As the broad Euxine, seems to stretch away
In infinite recess, and change its hue [renew.
From blue to gray; and then its first, pure tinge
A land of dreams—gigantic dreams of kings—
Oh! who can tell what mighty dreams are hid
In yonder mighty hippogriffs with wings,
Yon temples, yon stupendous pyramid,
These giant statues! The bending heavens bid
Our souls to pause and dream. But I arise
And force once more my aching feet to thrid
Those wrecks of ruin 'neath the glaring skies:
At last! at last! the sphinx arises on my eyes.

O, silent sphinx! earth's history in stone!

By these three pyramids so lone and gray;
Thy natal day is with the years unknown,
And with the glory passed from earth away.
To thee "a thousand years are as a day."

The life, the hope, the joy that earth has seen,
The passions and the sufferings men betray, [sheen,
Have passed before thee with their shade and
But still, thou gazest on, silent, unmoved, serene.

Thine is a classic knowledge. Thou beheld,
In that far morning when thy years were few,
Sweet Mimnon's chiming statue stand unveiled
In morning light; and, flocking to renew
Their daily vows, his votaries. There, too,
Thou sawest long funeral trains defile—
Triumphal marches, glittering pageants, new
Forms of homage wrought for the kingly smile
Of each proud conqueror who dwelt beside the
Nile.

Thy years behind thee fall, and fade like stars
That startle from the canopy of night;
Thou lookest back, beyond earth's tide of wars,
To almost see the earth emerge to sight
From heaven's destructive billows. And the flight
Of years has made thee weary. Days have died;
In ceaseless round the sun has gained heaven's
height

And shed his glory. Night has spread as wide.
The gods have been revealed and heroes deified.

The mystic rites that deified the sun
Are like its temples, ruined and o'erthrown;

The mysteries of Egypt too are done,
And all their glittering pageantry has flown.
All shrines where men have worshipped thou hast
known—

Egyptian, Roman, Greek, have come and gone,
Pagan, Christian, Moslem. The last alone
Lingers a shadow in the horizon,
Where the world's greatest works first met the
morning dawn.

The priest mapped out the heavens and grew wise ;
His deity an ox—the mighty beast—
A sacred form of power in his eyes ;
The sun arose and flooded all the east
With beams of glory, and when day had ceased
The stars came out and smiled, and he grew glad
Beneath their tender light. A visual feast
Were all the changes which the priesthood had
To thee, who sat unmoved though earth were
gay or sad.

Thou sawest successive generations rise,
The poet sang their magic songs and died ;
And each triumphant conqueror with sighs
Owned love his conqueror, and pressed his bride
With joyous rapture. Maidens, tender-eyed
As these of latter times, won hearts and smiled.
Art triumphed, architecture reigned, and wide
The sculptor's fame was blazoned. Sin beguiled
Her many votaries. Truth sat apart reviled.

Thou sawest the nations, like the foaming waves,
Form, gather into power, and pass away ;

Thou smilest in benignity o'er graves
Of pre-historic races ; and the gay,
Bronzed faces of the Orient did play
In Lilliputian grandeur at thy feet,
Ere Aaron or Moses had their day ;
Ere Pharaoh perished, or the desert beat
With the tired march of Israel's long retreat.

The cities fell around thee as Time's hand
Was laid upon them. Streets grew still and cold,
And learning vanished as the grains of sand
Ran through the hour-glass. Palaces grew old
And blackened into ruins, while the mold
Of foul decay fell. Continually
Around *thee* fell Time's mantle, fold on fold,
Casting a halo and a mystery [thee.
Over the silent form and hands that fashioned
And still no word breaks from thy stony lips,
Thou watcher in this strange and silent land,
Whose glory lies forgotten in eclipse,
As thou shalt lie beneath this shifting sand.
Yet all earth's history, all the great and grand
And truly glorious actions of mankind,
Of every age and race and every strand, [signed,
Have been since thou, O sphinx ! was first de-
And by those unknown hands upon the desert
shrined.

Oh, child of age ! I learn a thought from thee :
If from thy lips no thrilling accents fall
Of man's good actions and what man should be,
Thou, too, art silent to his evil—all.
He, who doth rule the heavens, will he call,

Like trooping phantoms from their graves, these
kings?
Will he pour out his bitterness and gall
Over their dust, for these forgotten things?
Or will He not bring life and healing on His
wings?

Thou child of age and silence. Even I,
Who falter here with slow and feeble tone,
Shall tread with buoyant step beneath a sky
Whose deeds and actions thou hast never known.
Thou hast one form—shalt have but one, alone—
But I through many changes yet shall draw
New beauties in new lands beyond the sun—
Treading where deathless spirits tread with awe,
Attain with joy at last the law within the law.

August, 1882.

THE SUBSTITUTE.

Wide fields rich with the year's increase;
A sweet calm resting everywhere:
O'er all the earth the smile of peace;
Peace on the sea—peace in the air.
Soft breezes from dark groves of spice,
And where the white magnolias bloom;
And whispers of a paradise
Where fluctuates the rich perfume
Of rose and lily. And the sea,
Ebbing and flowing, seems to tell
Unto the earth unceasingly
That all is peace, and all is well.

Scars vanish with the flight of years,
And social discords pass away;
Time dries the fount of bitter tears,
And in heaven's light we stand to-day,
Forgetting when war's flag unfurled—
When drums were beaten, fifes were blown,
And men went marching o'er the world
To where the star of battle shone,
With cheeks of iron and eyes of fire—
When hatred blew her horrid breath,
And roused the soul to deeds of ire,
While glory's path led on to death.
What cheeks were flushed with murderous rage,
What hearts were filled with wrath and hate,
What history's written on life's page,
What loves, what homes made desolate—
What words were said, what tears were shed—
The hearts that broke, the hopes which fled—
What cheering prospects passed away—
What lips met lips—no voice shall say,
No tongue can tell, no pen can write.
Wild as the ocean, which the ark
Went drifting o'er in nature's night,
Was our great discord—and as dark.
In that sad time two men I knew,
Named Thomas Wright, and William Gray,
Whose strong young hearts beat proud and true,
And these two men loved Martha Ray,
Fondly and true—but neither knew
Himself beloved by her; but when
O'er all the land war's bugle blew,

Calling upon the nation's sons
To rise and arm them for the fight,
To buckle swords and carry guns,
And to strike swift and strong for right—
Each heard the cry; so ere he went,
Eager his future fate to prove,
With words of tender sentiment
Each sought the maid to tell his love.

With manly air and honest face
Will Gray came first to bid adieu,
And asked within her heart a place
In words well chosen, strong and few;
But she refused him, saying: "Friend—
For friend you are—I know not how
To frame my speech. Let friendship lend
Language to clothe my sorrow now.
Far happier would life seem to me
If your kind words had ne'er been said;
I love you not as love should be
For him to whom I may be wed;
Promise me this—that friendship still
Shall be 'twixt us; and oh! I pray
Heaven, in its boundless mercy, will
Shed on thy head a happier day."

Trembling and pale he clasped her hand
And murmured hoarsely: "Dearest one!
The lark dwells lowest in the land
Of all the birds, yet loves the sun.
And I had fondly dreamed to lift
Myself to thee, and make thee mine;

To claim thy heart—a splendid gift—
But I must bow at friendship's shrine,
Loving thee still; but love is pure—
Through the pure passion that I feel,
Thine to command, I still endure
A constant friend in woe or weal.

Thus he went from her, bowed and lone.
The other came, his story told,
And claimed the maiden for his own;
She felt his arms around her fold
And love's hot kisses warm her cheek;
She lay upon his manly breast
Too full of happiness to speak,
Sphered in the Eden of love's rest.

The bitter pang that parting leaves
Came unto her, days flew away
On lightning wings; each man receives
Word to prepare for marching day;
And, side by side, one filled with bliss,
The other with a heart like stone,
After the farewell clasp and kiss
They sought the front where battle shone.

Time traveled on untiring feet:
Love lit the sullen hours for one,
And all his way seemed bright and sweet;
Despair shut out the other's sun—
And thus they went. Pride lifted one
And nerved his arm to strike his foes;
Love made the other's feet to run
With patriot zeal—and both men rose

From rank to rank, and both gained fame,
On fields of battle, carnage strewed ;
Each heard the nation's loud acclaim,
Each earned his country's gratitude.

The field of war is dark with fate ;
For he who walks with steps elate,
And he whose life is desolate,
Are destined darker days to know.
Mid cannon's roar and bugle's blow,
While each man fights and dreams of her,
Each finds himself a prisoner ;
And guarded by a strong detail,
With others, they are sent to jail.

They lay amongst a motley crowd,—
Some laughing—singing—others bowed
Beneath the great infliction. There
Were prayers and curses in the air.
Thomas and Will were set apart
And talking lowly. Thomas' heart
Was crushed and heavy—but for Gray
There was not e'en the blissful ray
Which shone for Thomas ; for he knew
Martha loved Thomas leal and true.

A lull fell, for a soldier bore
The will of the Commander Moore.
The order ran ; " An awful fate
Has visited our men of late,—
Ten prisoners have been foully slain.
These men (my soldiers) plead in vain
The rights of war,—condemned to die
On charge that each man was a spy

Without just trial,—now I command
Ten men be drawn to meet the lot
Dealt out to mine, so foully shot.
And let them meet the fate at dawn
Of the brave soldiers who have gone
Out of our ranks. Witness my hand.”

It was a fearful sight to see
Each whitening face and trembling knee
As by the guard the note was read;
Full many a deep-toned curse was said
'Gainst the commander—but no curse,
Or prayer, or passion, could reverse
The mandate. So the guards prepared
The lots;—all dumb,—for their hearts shared
A sympathy for men as brave,
So soon to drop into the grave.

Round went the balls, and when 'twas done
Gray held a milky marble one,
But Wright's was black. He was to die.
There broke from Gray a sudden cry;—
An awful hope surged in his heart,
But the next moment with a start
He turned to Wright. “Comrade! Give
Me the black, for thou must live.”

“Nay!” Thomas said: “I tell ye nay,
No cowardice hath stained my brow,
And shall not in this awful day.

I am a soldier and I bow
To Providence, who ruleth all;
What matter where a soldier fall,
If he be brave. I will obey.”

“But Martha Ray,” urged Gray again,
“What will she do, what happen, when
The courier rides down the lane
With stinging whip and stiffened rein,
To tell of thy unhappy fate?
I tell thee, man, this must not be;
Her life’s as dear to me as thee;
And yet I know she loves not me.
Yield now, or it will be too late;
No one will weep if I should fall;
The guard comes now; give me the ball.”

Dazed, Thomas yielded; black and white
Were quickly changed—the marvelous sight
Was witnessed by the guard between,
Who gazed in wonder on the scene—
Then Thomas fainted. Soon the guard
Spake tenderly as one who had a hard
Task, questioning: “Whom shall I say?”
The other answered—“William Gray.”
He wrote and passed. When Thomas came
Unto himself he asked what name
Was given. His friend could not reply,
But others told him. Then his cry
Arose against it. Gray must live—
He would not have it. They must give
Him the black ball—all too late,
His swoon had sealed his comrade’s fate.

Gray soothed him, and they sat till dawn
Talking over the times long gone
And then of Martha. “Tell her, you,”
Gray said, “my heart beat ever true,

And that I died for you and her,
Remembering the days that were
Ere battle called us. Now, good-bye ;
Love makes it easier to die."

Thus passed away that fearful night ;
The morning came and brought the men
Who were to seal the fate of ten
Brave soldiers. 'Twas a solemn sight.
Gray stood there in the morning light
Silent and calm. His brow was bare ;
The morning breeze played with his hair,
Which curled above a forehead fair
And beautiful. The clear brown eyes
Were lifted prayerfully towards the skies ;
No tremor shook that youthful frame
From which so soon his soul of flame
Was to soar heavenward. There, grim
But with moist eyes that looked at him,
Stood the armed soldiers. Behind, lay
The brown-stained coffin. There were birds
Singing their tend'rest songs that day,
And from the jail not far away

Came the low hum of muffled words.
As men spake of the glorious gift
Which he had given, that he might lift
One, with blue eyes and golden hair,
Out of the dark depths of despair
And save a comrade. On the hills
The warm sun lay and kissed the rills.
Nature her sweetest smile put on,
Uncaring that ere day was gone

Beneath her sunlight there should be
A most stupendous tragedy.

“Kneel,” came the word. He bent his knees;
And now approaching him he sees
An officer to blind-fold him. “Nay!
I need not that. Let my eyes stay
Free to the sunlight of God’s day.
One moment more for thought and prayer,
Another breath of God’s pure air.”
He clasped his hands and lowered his brow
A moment’s space; then faced them. “Now!”
“Fire!” cried the chief. The flames leaped out;
From all the crowd arose a shout
Of hate and horror. Down the vale
The echoes poured to tell the tale
How man had died for fellow man;

But one who knelt upon a knee
And felt his pulse and took his hand,
Heard, murmured like a dying breeze
That sighs in autumn through the trees,
“Martha, beloved, I die for thee.”

Nine widows mourn nine husbands dead;
War’s cloud rolls past and far away;
Soldiers come back with stately tread,
And Thomas Wright weds Martha Ray.

A weeping willow’s shade is thrown
Over a stately shaft of stone
Which rises white o’er yonder bay;
It bears the name of William Gray;
And carved upon it you can see
These simple words: “He died for me.”

IF I COULD SEE THEE.

If I could see thee as thou wast
When youth's green spring hung o'er thee—
Thine eyes so full of guileless trust,
Life's unknown joys before thee—
Glad, I would cease my wailing strain,
And sing a song of joy again.

If on thy shadowed face could glow
The old forgotten glory—
Thy features could not help but show
While listening to love's story—
Glad would I cease my song of pain,
And sing a song of joy again.

But on thy face, and in thine eye,
The cares of life are lying;
The founts of joy are drained and dry,
And Hope itself is dying;
And thy pale brow, once fresh and sweet,
Is tracked by Time's unlingering feet.

And all thy mellow laugh is gone,
Which once made music in my ear;
The eyes which once I doted on,
That beamed upon me, smiling, clear,
Grown lusterless and dim at last,
Are faded mockeries of the past.

How can my harp forget my pain,
And strike again a note to Love?
I fail; my feeble effort—vain—
Is like the moaning of a dove,

Which tries to sing a merry song,
But fails, and tells a tale of wrong.

And what thou art—and what I am,
And might have been, I dare not think ;
But surely with unerring step

We move unto life's final brink,
Where I shall cease my wailing strain,
And sing a song of joy again.

WHY VEX THE HEAVENS WITH USELESS PRAYER?

Why vex the heavens with useless prayer?

The glorious heavens above us spread—

Where skies are blue, and night is fair,

And bright stars circle round our head ;

And light seems bending everywhere—

Why vex the heavens with useless prayer?

God is all-wise—the priests declare ;

He knoweth every hidden spring

Which moves our minds, and everywhere

He animates each living thing :

He fills the circumambient air—

Why vex the heavens with needless prayer?

God seeth all—the preacher cries ;

Each secret action man has done

Is open to His watchful eyes,

And not a feather in the sun

Floats but He guides it by his care—

Why vex the heavens with faithless prayer?

No space exists where he is not ;
Far as the flight of farthest star,
In Pluto's loneliest Stygian grot,
God and His mighty angels are :
Hither his messengers repair,
And work his will, nor hearken prayer.

God loveth all—His Scriptures tell ;
Each soul came forth at His command,
And every soul He willeth well ;
Earth lies enclosed by His strong hand :
He will not doom us to despair—
Why vex the heavens with doubtful prayer?

He changes not—a thousand years
May pass, and He will be the same.
He giveth life, and willeth tears ;
To some gives honor—others, shame :
We cannot fly beyond his care—
Why vex the heavens with useless prayer?

His laws are fixed, and they will work
His own good will. He sees the end,
And all the thoughts of life that lurk
In man, and what they all portend :
He gives none more than he can bear—
And works His plans despite of prayer.

For me, I trust His perfect grace ;
I lay my life within His hand ;
For though I cannot see His face,
My Father's love is great and grand :
His heart the same sweet love will bear,
E'en though I bend not here in prayer.

To do my work as fits a man,
Trusting the great outcome to Him,
Who gazes from that better land,
Where love and life are never dim ;
To love my neighbor, and to bear
My burden here, is more than prayer.

And thus I live in perfect faith,
Knowing whate'er is best will be :
And soon, or later, lurking Death,
Who comes for all, will come for me :
But now I wait, and yield my share
Of human life in praise, not prayer.

MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.

Above the valley hangs the languid air ;
On dale and hill
The drowsy summer rests ; the sky is fair,
The woods are still.
The happy birds are singing in the groves :
The honey bee,
Wandering in search of golden nectar, roves
From lea to lea.
The wild rose spreads its petals to the air ;
The zephyrs sigh
Wearied with all the rich perfumes they bear,
And sweetly die.
The blue haze drifts along the distant creeks ;
The trailing beech
Droops its long branches o'er the bank, and seeks
The waves to reach.

Oh! with what calm delight have I beheld
This blissful scene,
In other happy, youthful days of eld,
When earth was green,

And skies less fair than even this blissful day,
The air less calm,
And summer breezes on their unknown way
Brought less of balm.

Now while a joy is over all the ground
I lie and weep
Above a loved one sleeping 'neath this mound
Her last long sleep.

Her last long sleep, which knows no waking here,
And it may be
This awful sleep may last, for me and her,
Eternally.

O, mother! O, the pang, the awful pain,
That fills my breast,
To think that nevermore on earth again
My eyes shall rest

On thy dear features; that no more our hands
Shall touch and twine;
No more love join our lips, nor thy commands
Thrill me like wine!

How can the changing years bring aught to prize
Since thou art gone?
I grasp the things once precious in my eyes—
Their worth is flown.

The noble things I thought to do and dare
Are left undone,
Because thou art not here with me to share
The triumphs won.

O, from those spotless heights to which ye rise
In yon deep blue,
Among the deathless souls who walk the skies
In joy with you,

Whose hands clasped thine with an unchanging
love,

And welcomed thee
To those pure courts so fair, so high above
This earth and me—

Turn thou those eyes on one who walketh here,
And faintly hopes
That some celestial strain may reach his ear
From heaven's high slopes ;

Some breathing of that wondrous harmony,
That strain so fine,
Which sets the doubting soul from error free
And makes divine

That nature over whom the music steals
In languorous tone.

And may the voice which soothes my pain, and
heals,

Be thine alone ;

Thou who didst cheer my petty sorrows here,
My fleeting grief,
Be thine the melody to charm my ear
And give relief.

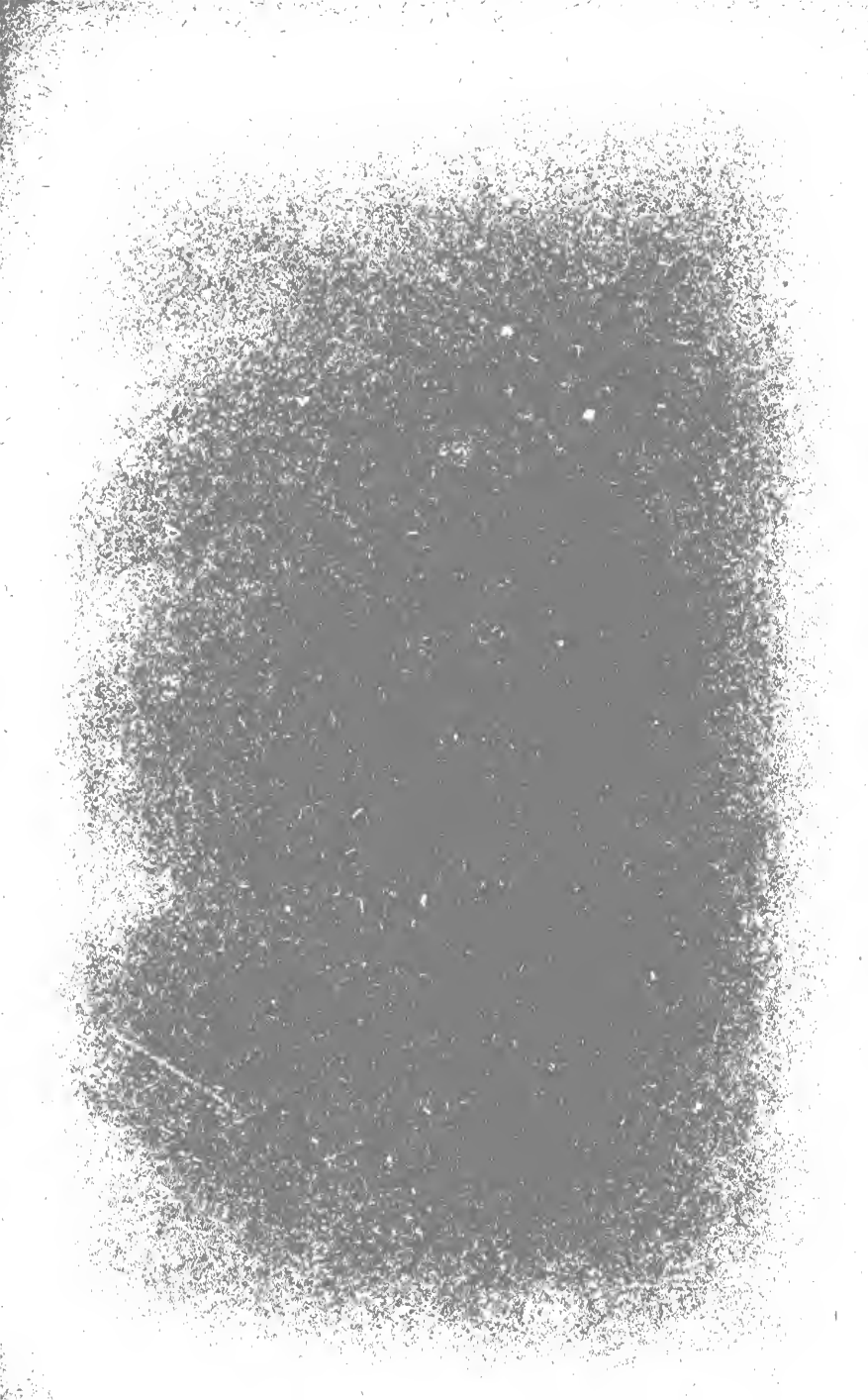
So shall the days be bright for me once more ;
So shall the earth
For me her sweetest roundelay outpour
In trills of mirth.

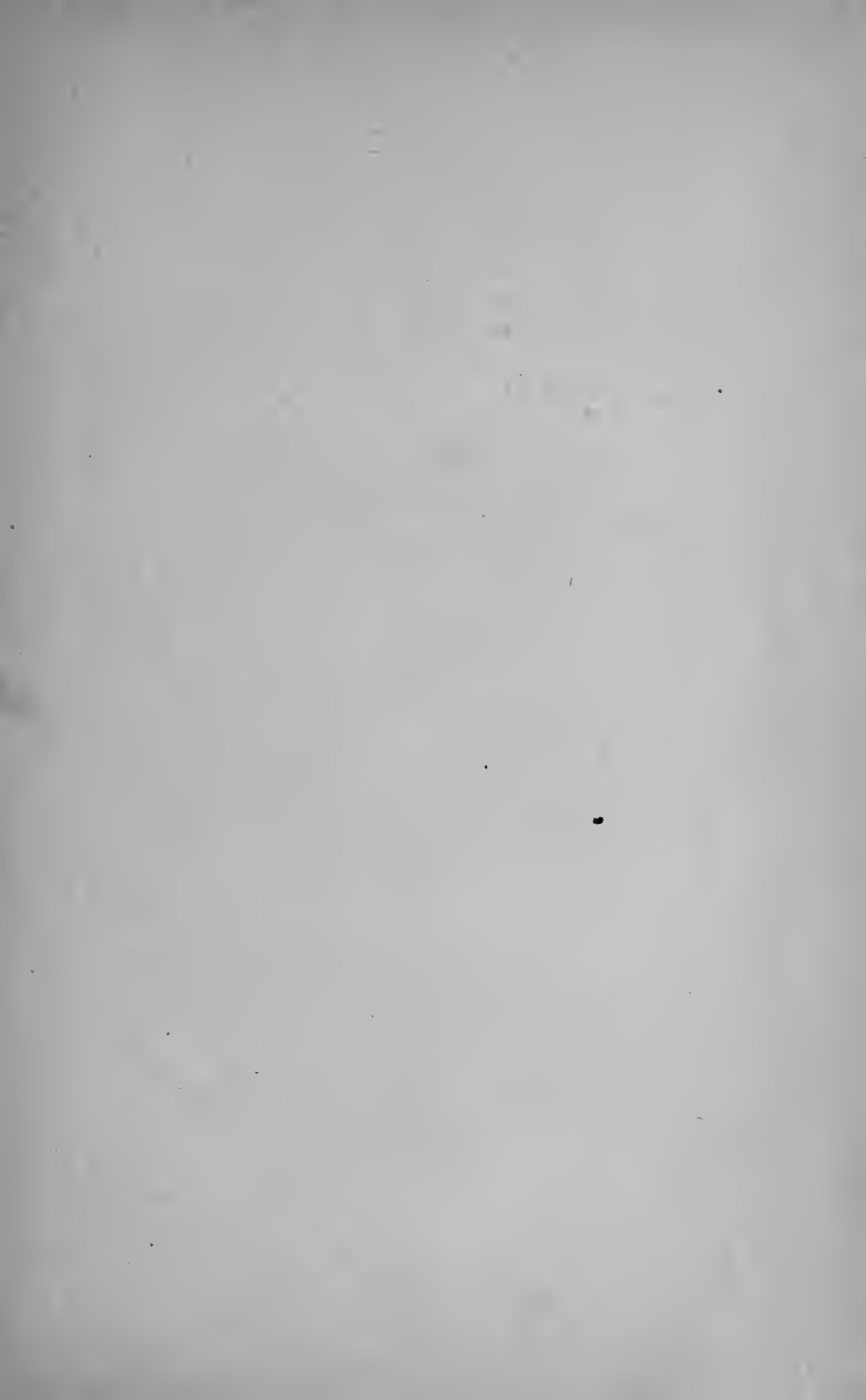
So shall I feel that all along life's path
My feet shall be
Guarded by all the power thy spirit hath,
Continually—

Until my change shall come, and Love shall spread
Before my sight
The broad, fair land, where live again the dead
In endless light.

June, 1882.







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